

The Editors: Reagan's Secret Government

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

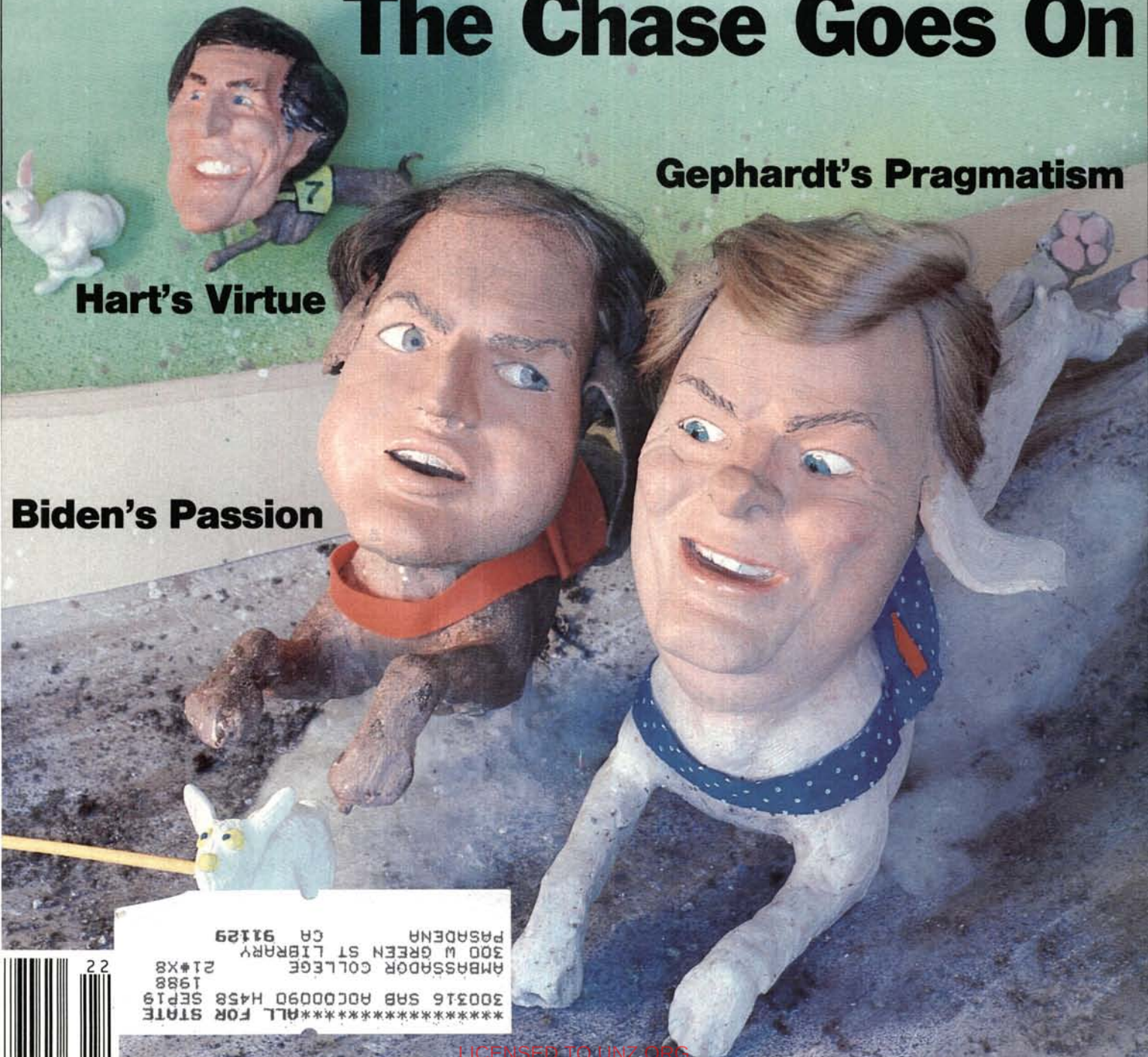
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The Chase Goes On

Gephardt's Pragmatism

Hart's Virtue

Biden's Passion



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FROM WASHINGTON

NICE YOUNG MAN

Surveying the Democratic field, I'm already starting to miss that hint of insanity that disturbed so many people about Gary Hart. Not everyone will agree, of course, that a touch of madness is a desirable qualification for a presidential candidate. Sanity buffs will be increasingly attracted in the next few weeks to Senator Albert Gore Jr., a self-described "raging moderate" who nevertheless does a good Hart-style generational-future routine. Thoughtful, sincere, responsible to a fault, handsome in a reassuringly unglamorous way, Gore is not the type who would ever change his name, alter his signature, or sail away on the good ship Monkey Business.

On an airplane recently, the pollster Peter Hart (no relation) showed newspaper photos of all the leading Democratic contenders to a foreign couple who knew nothing of American politics. They agreed that Gore looked the most like a president.

Gore's presidential qualities already have attracted "IMPAC '88," several dozen rich Democratic fund-raisers who hope to maximize their leverage in the party by acting in concert. Gore had decided not to run in 1988, but importuning and promises of financial support from this group persuaded him to change his mind. The IMPAC people like Gore's freshness and his moderation. The standard poop holds that, as a 39-year-old Tennessean, Gore will also exert a special appeal for Southerners and young people.

Gore, though, is not really a Southerner. What he is is the presidential candidate from Washington. He was born here, the son of Congressman, later Senator, Albert Gore Sr. The elder Gore, famous as a progressive populist, sent his

son to St. Alban's, Washington's leading prep school, where Al was captain of the football team, and on to Harvard, where he graduated with honors. After marrying a Washington girl and serving in Vietnam, young Al settled in Nashville, where he worked on the local newspaper and attended law and divinity schools before running for Congress in 1976, age 28, and moving up to the Senate in 1984, age 36.

There is nothing wrong with this history. In fact, it's admirable. But the career path it describes would be more familiar to British politics than to American. There, distinguished left-wing politicians see no irony in breeding their kids for politics by raising them in the capital and sending them to the best schools. Gore is a dynastic candidate in a way even the Kennedys have not yet become. Kennedys are messier; none has buffed his résumé to quite such a high gloss. And no Washington-bred Kennedy has yet run for president. Gore tediously insists that he wasn't interested in a political career until his newspaper work exposing corruption in local government made him realize that politics could be a positive force for change. That is a bow to the American convention that politics should not be a life's ambition.

As for his youth, Gore is an old person's idea of a young person. That also is admirable. Some people, like Ronald Reagan, go into politics out of genuine ideological passion. Some, like most of the presidential candidates of both parties, are motivated by naked ambition, which leaves them twisted in various ways. Gore is ambitious, to be sure, but his ambition is overlaid with calm dynastic self-assurance. It's easy to imagine those wealthy fund-raisers interviewing Al Gore, comparing him mentally to the sweaty pack of middle-aged rivals, and thinking, "What a nice young man!" Whether a nice young man is what the youth of America hungers to rally around is more problematic.

Gore has got moderation down to a science. "Some observers," he says, "have concluded that government itself is the problem. . . . Others argue that government is all that keeps matters from getting still worse. Both sides are right—to a point." He opened his campaign with a call for "international cooperation to combat AIDS and Alzheimer's disease." He recently introduced legislation to establish "International Greenhouse Effect Year" and also has been in

the forefront of concern about the ozone layer. Last year he sponsored the "Supercomputer Network Study Act," intended "to explore the potential of fiber-optic networks to link the nation's supercomputers. . . ."

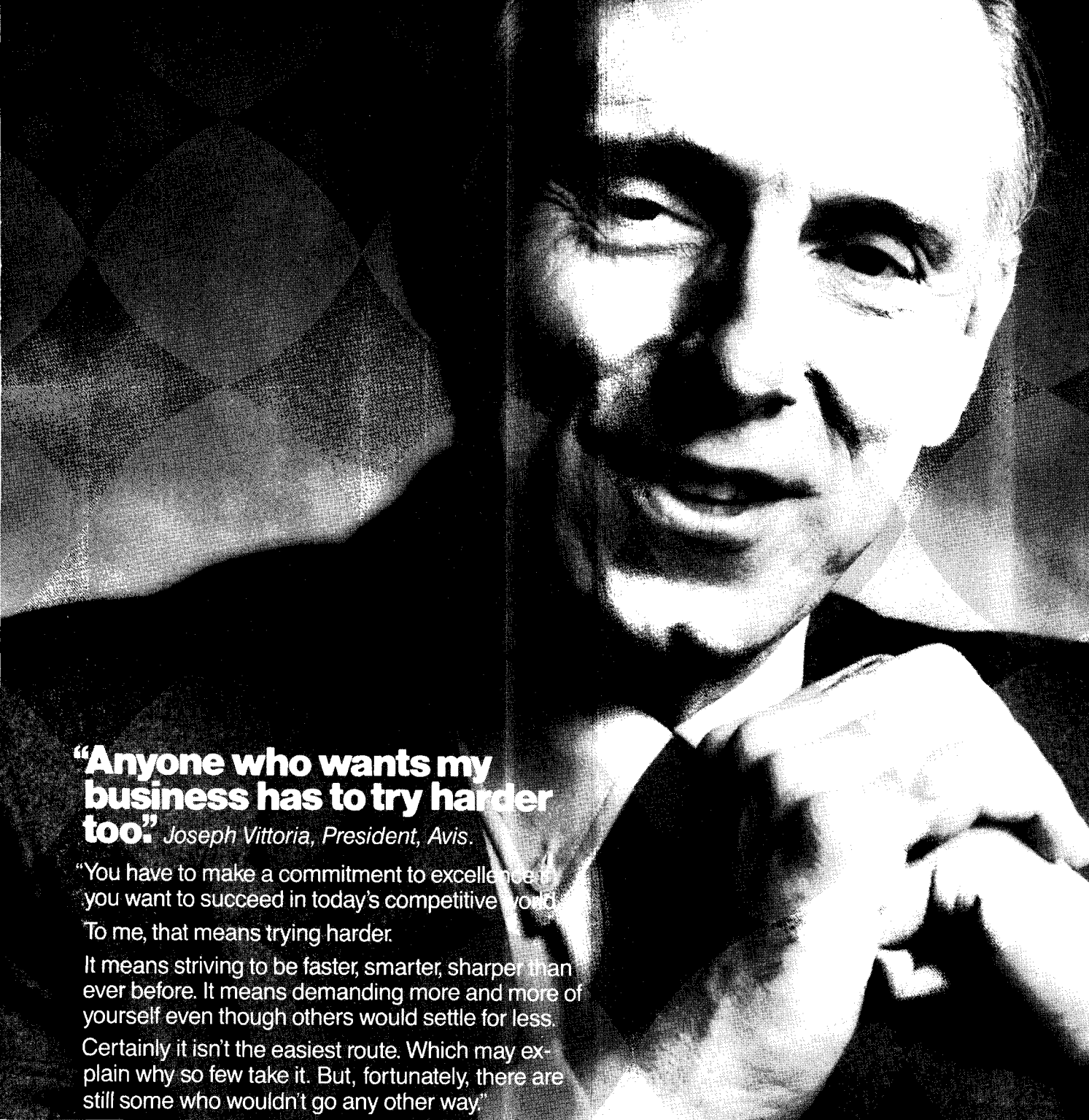
The focus on "study" is a characteristic Gore touch. Asked his opinion of the Baby M (surrogate mother) case by the *New York Times*, he said: "We need to accelerate the development of a consensus. But it must emerge from a broad discussion. It would be important and helpful to all if the Congressional Bio-medical Ethics Board would designate these issues as topics for priority study and action." And have I mentioned Gore's proposal for an International Copyright Tribunal? His bill to create a computerized link between organ transplant donors and recipients? His hearings on the release of genetically engineered organisms?

All this is admirable, admirable, admirable. Decades from now, if we are all frying for lack of ozone or roasting in a global carbon dioxide greenhouse, if our supercomputers are lonely and unlinked, if genetic mutants have seized control of the Congressional Biomedical Ethics Board, the concerns of today's other politicians will seem criminally petty. But the "pragmatic," "visionary," "problem-solving" approach to politics that Gore has perfected is in some ways an evasion of politics.

Politics is about disagreement, and disagreement is not usually due to a lack of foresight, planning, study. The important political disagreements involve the clash of material interests. "Instead of telling people what to do," Gore says, "we should listen and learn how to give them the tools to do what they want." But true leadership consists of telling people things they don't want to hear sometimes, making them mad, changing their minds. Gore's style of moderation is to go instead for issues that are "difficult" in the sense of being obscure or complicated, but not contentious.

Even Gore's greatest genuine political contribution—his promotion of the Midgetman mobile single-warhead nuclear missile—has the flavor of high-minded non-ideological cogitation. In the ideologically charged battle to get this missile actually built, and get other missiles unbuilt, Gore has not done so well.

Making friends is easy in politics. Al Gore needs to prove himself by making some serious enemies.



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CONCEPTIONS OF LIFE

To the editors:

Charles Krauthammer, in offering ways for living on the "slippery slope" of the new biotechnology ("The Ethics of Human Manufacture," May 4), states that society should discourage the practice of surrogacy without outlawing it, and to that end, he would enshrine in law the mother's right to keep her baby regardless of contractual obligations. I doubt this would discourage childless couples from seeking out surrogate mothers, for their other options would still be extremely limited, and they may be inclined to believe (however unreasonably) that the surrogate they have chosen would never back out. In reality this solution would attract (or at least not discourage) surrogate mothers who, like the mother of Baby M, have never fully come to terms with what surrogacy ultimately involves. Nor, under Krauthammer's proposal, would they ever have to; they would always be free to change their minds, even though that would frustrate an already frustrated couple.

In fact, the decision rendered in the Baby M case may well serve Krauthammer's end best. Since the law now demands that surrogates fulfill their contractual obligations, potential surrogate mothers will probably think longer and harder about what they are undertaking in surrogacy. Agencies that arrange such services are likely to take greater care in assessing potential surrogates. And the result will probably be that only those women who are psychologically and emotionally prepared to be surrogates will get the chance. This seems the surest way to avoid another tragedy like the Baby M case.

ANDREW ALEXANDER
Toronto, Canada

To the editors:

Charles Krauthammer embraces the Warnock report's "14-day rule," which recommends that before 14 days an embryo be considered "tissue," and that after 14 days discarding or experimenting on a fetus be made a criminal offense. If it is at 14 days that the mass of cells is considered a "human embryo" that deserves "special protection," must not elective abortion be made a criminal offense as well? This procedure does something far worse than experimenting

on an embryo; it destroys a human fetus.

JUDITH POZAR
Sunderland, Massachusetts

To the editors:

Charles Krauthammer dreads an "age of fetal manipulation for purposes of treatment and research" and advocates Warnock's 14-day limit: "[Society] has slid far behind the 14-day period. In most English-speaking jurisdictions, one can do with an aborted fetus that is many weeks old pretty much what one wants: discard, research, implant." This seems to be an implicit attack on abortion, oddly situated in the context of an explicitly "secular" critique of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's declaration on artificial forms of procreation. Should not Mr. Krauthammer, as a secular critic concerned with civil law, distinguish between fetuses made available by the legal termination of pregnancy and those bred on the nightmarish fetus farms of the future? He shows admirable awareness of the tremendous impact of pregnancy on the life and body of the mother, but he classifies this impact under the prejudicial and undesirable term "maternal instinct." The obverse and necessary correlative of this should be an awareness of a mother's need (perhaps also instinctual) in certain circumstances not to carry and bear a child—an equally natural and crucial right that conflicts with secular law as Mr. Krauthammer envisions it. He has erected one "fence" too many around fetus experimentation by presenting the use of aborted fetuses as an undifferentiated violation of the 14-day limit deemed reasonable by science.

SUSAN DE SOLA RODSTEIN
Baltimore, Maryland

To the editors:

In Charles Krauthammer's critique of the Vatican viewpoint on the specific applications of reproductive technology, he brushes past the most important concept: that the moral direction of society should not be defaulted to technology. Science is not necessarily immoral, but it is certainly amoral. Whether or not we agree with every detail of the Church's position, the overriding fact is that in a world where unwanted fetuses are aborted by the millions and unwanted children desperately wait for placement into loving homes, it is unconscionable

to direct our attention and resources toward reproductive technology.

STEVEN TIGER
Monroe, New York

THE SNAP TRADITION

To the editors:

I enjoyed Michael Massing's article on "Snap Books" (May 4), but was surprised at his claim that the genre was established in 1983 with Joan Didion's *Salvador*. He apparently has missed decades of quotable naïveté. One of my favorites was by Susan Sontag on her brief visit to North Vietnam during the war, a booklet that featured the noble savage variety of condescension toward Third World folks. She saw a downed U.S. fighter jet and informed us that the whole thing would be used by farmers—engine parts to repair tractors, rubber tires for sandals, etc.—cleverly turning the adversity of enemy attacks into material advantage. There is virtually nothing in a jet fighter that could be used in a tractor, which is why Vietnam still has so many downed aircraft to put into war museums.

R. ROSS RODGERS
Washington, D.C.

LINNAS'S OPTIONS

To the editors:

TRB, in "Nazis and Communists" (May 11), omitted one thing: What should be done, or should have been done, with Karl Linnas? Since no other country would take him, there were three alternatives. He could have been released in the U.S. to live out his life peacefully, but that would be unthinkable. He could be put in a boat and floated out to sea, but that, too, would be unthinkable. So he was simply returned whence he came, Estonia, which is now part of the Soviet Union. That is unfortunate, but it is a fact. The KGB is quite capable of fabricating documents, but in his case why would they bother? Get Linnas out of here.

STEPHEN ROANE
Larchmont, New York

YUPPIE HEADACHE

To the editors:

Robert Bazell brings the "chronic Epstein-Barr syndrome" controversy more clearly into public focus ("Yuppie
continued on page 41



THE NEW REPUBLIC

JUNE 1, 1987

REAGAN'S SECRET GOVERNMENT

The undisputed star of the first week of hearings before the House-Senate Iranamok committee was Richard Secord, the retired Air Force general who set up a covert "enterprise" to carry out operations for Lt. Col. Oliver North in Iran, Central America, and elsewhere. Secord squirmed a bit when the committee probed his handling of the proceeds of arms sales to Iran. Yet most of the time he was boldly unapologetic, aggressively asserting that he, North, and the other U.S. officials who helped them had acted selflessly, and legally, on behalf of their country and their president. On the last day of his testimony, Secord even went so far as to propose donating the \$8 million in arms-to-the-Ayatollah money still left in Switzerland to a fund for the *contras* set up in memory of the late CIA director William J. Casey. With that remark, Secord essentially thumbed his nose at the entire inquiry.

As we went to press, Robert McFarlane, the former national security adviser, was still testifying. Many more witnesses will follow him. But whatever new details about the Iranamok scandal emerge, it is unlikely that anyone, except perhaps North himself, will embody and express the particular kind of corruption at the heart of the affair more completely than the defiant Richard Secord has.

Iranamok involves questions of criminal wrongdoing, but as important as those questions are, they are not necessarily central to the scandal. Thanks to independent counsel Lawrence Walsh, Carl "Spitz" Channell and Richard Miller have pleaded guilty to setting up a fraudulent tax-exempt foundation to buy arms for the *contras*, and have publicly named Oliver North as a co-conspirator. These convictions are probably just the first of many more to come throughout the summer.

Channell's racket, however, didn't break new ground in the arts of Washington sleaze. Basically, the National En-

dowment for the Preservation of Liberty was an illegal variation on the well-established and perfectly legal methods of influence-peddling, which, though not invented under Ronald Reagan, has enjoyed a renaissance during his tenure. It was "access" to Reagan (via North) that Channell traded on, and for—he even paid \$20,000 a month to a former White House aide to arrange meetings with the president for Channell's contributors. But if the National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty *had* simply used these contributors' money just to buy TV ads for the *contras*, as the president says he was told, then Channell's outfit would have probably remained a respected member of the local access industry.

Secord, on the other hand, represents a much more corrosive influence on the political and constitutional process. Is he a "patriot or profiteer?" asks *Newsweek*. The question misses the point. It was in the very nature of the operation he constructed and supervised that he be able to pass himself off as either one. The general's public-private "enterprise," a kind of foreign policy Amtrak, was perhaps unique in American history. On the one hand, the operation depended on the power of the United States government, both for its legitimacy and for moral and practical resources. When it came time to enlist the cooperation of other officials from the NSC, the CIA, or the State Department—Secord listed several—or to impress Iranian contacts, the "enterprise" was a public entity, acting on orders from the president. Secord was, as North wrote in a memo, an agent of the CIA.

But when it came to being held accountable to the institutions of democratic government, the enterprise considered itself to be strictly a private venture. There was no fiscal attachment to any institution of the government—though all the money was raised from the sale of U.S. government property, that cash was deemed by Secord to

belong to the enterprise. And, partly as a consequence of that curious form of financing, no legal restrictions were deemed to apply to the enterprise. The Boland amendment, for example, which was in effect from October 1984 to October 1986, banned official military support for the *contras*. For purposes of that law, Secord says, his operation was totally private.

This ingenious double structure was the White House's means for carrying out secret, unilateral foreign policy actions without worrying about Congress, public opinion—or, for that matter, potentially uncooperative elements within the administration itself, especially within the State Department.

Evasiveness was a necessary motivation for setting up such a shadow government. But it was not sufficient. It took more than a mere fetish for concealment to inspire this plan. It took a certain very specific mentality as well—an extraconstitutional mentality. This mentality is

at the heart of the scandal.

Consider why Secord may have chosen to testify voluntarily in the first place. Up until last week, he had been taking the Fifth and fighting to keep his secret Swiss bank accounts secret from Walsh and the committee. (And he still hasn't changed his mind about the latter.) Partly, Secord came forward to defend himself from the charge that he profited from the arms sales with the explanation that he did everything because the National Security Council staff had told him the president needed him. If he had a selfish motive at all, he said, it was the hope that his loyal service would win him a job as head of covert operations at the CIA later on.

But self-preservation alone can't account for the fact that Secord chose to testify rather than plead the Fifth until he was granted immunity, or that he spoke out with such fervor. He seemed to have a deeper motivation. He wanted to serve as spokesman for the secret government-within-

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This
Week

Last
Week Weeks
on Chart

1. PRESS GANG ✓

— 1

Press ethics. The Hart affair exemplifies American political thermodynamics: as candidates deflate, the press bloats. Do reporters really believe that their quadrennial paparazzi circus is a test of presidential "character"? In fact it's a test of presidential slickness: the ability of candidates to exploit the press rather than letting the press exploit them.

2. TAIL ON THE DONKEY ✓

2 11

1988. The Democrats' Seven Dwarfs situation has created a buzz about the first decisive convention in decades. What's interesting is the sense, still on the fringe, that this is a good idea, that leadership choice has become too much a matter of endless telegenics and should be returned to insiders who know the candidates. This is, in fact, the flip side of testing leadership mettle in the press.

3. WHAT, ME WORRY? ✓

1 24

Iranamok. Reagan's strategy of playing the fool in his own White House has created a void in the hearings. There's no dramatic sense to these proceedings because Reagan has abdicated the emotional center, and a weary electorate is letting him get away with it. Item: after a week of hearings, Reagan goes to Tuskegee and gets an ovation. Good Ol' Ron.

4. SUCH GOOD FRIENDS ✓

— 1

Wedtech. The investigation into Meese's Wedtech actions raises his media bogeyman status another notch. Meese's fate could well make a difference to Reagan, too. He's an old crony, and it is in defense of their buddies that presidents get themselves into their stickiest, most self-destructive public stances. This is thin White House ice, and Reagan's already walking on it.

5. SCOW TREK ✓

* 2

The garbage crisis. The Flying Dutchman barge has spotlighted the country's garbage problem: compared with other wealthy societies, the U.S. makes a negligible effort to recycle its garbage. It'll take more than the barge to change this. Americans resist sorting out

their refuse; it's a personal bother, and social considerations are nonexistent. Besides, being rich enough *not* to bother is a deeply ingrained national illusion.

6. RUBBER CHECK ✓

7 18

AIDS. Seems like only weeks ago that "condom" wasn't a nice word. Yet states already are getting into hot water over explicit pro-condom campaigns. Illinois had to scotch its rap song about condoms, and New York is looking for takers for its "shocking" TV spots. Meanwhile, AIDS has passed cancer as the disease Americans most dread.

7. THE WASTE LAND ✓

* 3

TV. The development of a two-tier TV audience (ZC, April 6 and April 20) is becoming controversial. The discovery that black audiences are increasingly important to network shows has led to concerns that network audiences are too downscale for many advertisers. Upscale types may be watching cable or their VCRs. More precise measurements are on the way.

8. KISS KISS, BANG BANG ✓

— 1

Miami. Miami has joined a small handful of U.S. cities that are box-office draws, whose names evoke something. It's not the art deco, it's high-rolling drug smuggling. And it's not negative; it's appealing. Miami is the Chicago of the '80s, and both cities are heirs to the appeal of wide-open frontier violence. It's what fascinates others about us, and despite the homilies, we like it too.

9. THE BORING FUTURE ✓

— 1

Boredom. C. Northcote Parkinson has announced a new law, one likely to be cited frequently: "The chief product of an automated society is a widespread and deepening sense of boredom." Critics are already objecting, but Parkinson has whole shopping malls full of short-lived gadgetry and fads to clinch his point.

10. ERIC THE RED ✓

— 1

Eric Davis. What new baseball season would be complete without the greatest rookie phenom ever? Even so, the Reds' Eric Davis—a base-stealer on a 70-homer pace—is getting the most breathless press since *Damn Yankees'* Joe Hardy. Nobody's comparable. Maybe, but will they love him in September, after pitchers have had a few looks at him, as they loved him in May?

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

a-government that he, North, Poindexter, and the others had created—to defend the view of the world that had justified the creation of that secret government.

Indeed, what seemed to irk Secord most was that when the enterprise was exposed, no Reagan administration official had the nerve to stand up publicly for the way of thinking that Secord assumed they all shared. Quite the contrary. He was “betrayed” by Attorney General Edwin Meese, who blew the cover on the diversion of funds. Secord’s voice dripped with scorn for Meese, who succumbed to “anxiety” about the secret operation. Furthermore, Secord spoke in the tones of a man who expected the American people to accept his mentality, even if the committee couldn’t. After all, in the immediate wake of the disclosure of the diversion of funds to the *contras*, he drafted a speech for President Reagan explaining what was being done secretly in the national interest, and the reasons it had to be done. He never got a chance to see that speech delivered by the president, so he gave an impromptu version of it himself to the committee, and to a national television audience as well.

This mentality could already be glimpsed in the report of the Tower Commission. The NSC staff’s notes to one another offered a rhetoric of uplift masquerading as analysis. McFarlane, for example, told North that only his efforts gave U.S. foreign policy “a semblance of integrity and gumption,” but that the ungrateful public was too shortsighted to be trusted with the facts about North’s efforts, or to appreciate them if it did know: “Such is the state of democracy in the late 20th century,” McFarlane lamented. The basement of Reagan’s White House was the last re-

doubt against the decline of the West.

As besieged defenders of civilization, McFarlane, Poindexter, North and Company exhorted one another to do more. As they drove themselves deeper and deeper into their misconceived missions, their not-so-subtle contempt for democratic public opinion came out. White House communications director Pat Buchanan articulated the mood when he praised North for aiding the *contras* secretly at a time when North’s “distracted and indifferent countrymen” couldn’t have been counted on to recognize their own interests in Nicaragua. American democracy, many top administration officials seemed to believe, isn’t up to the twilight struggle, so they had to take unilateral action. Congress, the media, and the bureaucracy (and, in Secord’s apparent view, even some members of Reagan’s personal coterie such as Meese) lack the will to support necessary, if nasty, missions. Those jobs would have to be left up to cadres skilled in covert operations, arms dealing, and Swiss bank accounts. Secord was proud to take up the task.

Reagan’s culpability in this affair lies not only in the orders he gave—implicitly or explicitly—to North, McFarlane, Poindexter, and the rest. It lies also in the fact that his administration made official Washington safe for this kind of thinking. Reagan, for all his populist pretensions, legitimized the idea that Americans cannot understand their own interests and need an elite to take secret action for them, even if they and their elected representatives don’t know or approve. The real measure of the weakness of “late 20th century democracy” in the United States is that the “enterprise” managed to proceed undiscovered and unimpeded so long.

THE LOSS OF HART

“When politics goes well,” writes philosopher Michael Sandel, “we can know a good in common that we cannot know alone.” But our politics has not been going well for at least a generation, and the common good can hardly be conjured up. This is not a new diagnosis of the American predicament. It is what Walter Lippmann meant when he lamented the erosion of “the public philosophy,” the set of norms and of limits that, however imperfectly, assures that democracy is not merely the accounts of a fickle electorate. Without such a public philosophy, the notion of citizenship itself is degraded, its demands reduced to the hustling to the polls of masses of apathetic and uninformed voters, stirred for the moment by some often artificial fear or petty promise.

Politicians themselves sometimes complain about the system that has produced them—though usually only at moments of defeat. Gary Hart, in his churlish statement of withdrawal from the presidential race, declared that the “system” demeans democracy, that it humiliates can-

didates and their families. Spouses and children are, of course, free not to submit to the humiliations. In a few refreshing instances they have refused to submit and have retained their own identities rather than become appendages of campaigns beyond human scale. This independence of family members has never disadvantaged any contender. It is not the populace that insists on the happy family portrait, it is the candidate. But when the portrait is false it haunts and it taunts, which is what it did in the case of yesterday’s front-runner. Hart himself, moreover, had never alerted us to the indignities he experienced in running for president until even his own colossal hubris was no longer sufficient to endure them.

But it is true that the public and the press display an inordinate and sometimes vicious curiosity about the sexual and pecuniary trespasses of people in public life. It is something to worry about. We do not want to be forced to choose from among aspirants for high office without a

single skeleton in their closets. That would probably make for an even more uninspired and uninspiring politics. Our culture's fixation on the private morality of public servants as an index of their political worthiness is not a healthy portent. The trouble is that our politicians as a class have not provided us with any other palpable index by which they are to be judged and measured. In a way, they have given us no alternative but to be exquisitely alert to the first hint of peccadillo.

SOME OF THEM have actually made themselves the issue, not always explicitly but at least by indirection. The Kennedys were an extreme example, with the insistent evocation of their glamorous personalities and family lineage and ostentatious use of wealth for celebrity. Thus Ted Kennedy was an inevitable casualty of what is correctly called the issue of "character." Gary Hart is another such instance. Standing for even less than Kennedy, Hart in his withdrawal statement was unable to distinguish his own raw ambitions from some transcendent and singular cause. Who, among his supporters, could define that cause? Politicians who make too much of themselves are especially vulnerable to what otherwise might be only the harmless prurient interest of ordinary folk in the lives of the famous and powerful. Kennedy and Hart are egregious cases of this interest assuming real political meaning.

But the contingent vulnerability casts a shadow over all who aspire to the public trust. And it will continue to do so as long as American politicians fail to articulate some relevant contemporary version of the public philosophy. That public philosophy must encompass more than just "the issues" or even "new ideas."

This may require different politicians, unschooled in the political habits of the age, such as dependence on pollsters and consultants to set agendas. When Jimmy Carter installed Gerald Rafshoon in the White House and made Pat Caddell's polling operation a near annex of the executive, he debased the political currency of our democracy. His homey cardigan was just another p.r. man's gambit, another sign of disrespect for the people. A good test of this season's crop of candidates would be to see if any is willing to move away from the tyranny of these permanent campaign professionals, these intruders between the demos and its governors.

But the people cannot on their own envision a public philosophy. That's what leadership is for. Three decades ago Lippmann noted that a sudden loss of the mandate of heaven, or of its Western secular equivalent, seemed to be the fate of the political leadership class. And that was a decade before Lyndon Johnson couldn't appear on an American campus, before Richard Nixon was driven from office, before Jimmy Carter became a figure of ridicule, before Reagan's shabby Iranamok scandal.

A part of Ronald Reagan's promise was that he would restore some sense of a public philosophy. Although his particular variation struck us as a little bit backward-looking, it nevertheless seemed to many to be preferable to the officially sanctioned anomie of the interests that was

the Democratic legacy. For some, of course, it was exactly this backward-looking quality that made Reaganism attractive. The country was poised for one of those cyclical or pendular swings Arthur Schlesinger has taught us to expect. But this was no "public philosophy" at all. Domestically, there was no operative conception of the common good or of a commonweal. The rhetoric of a binding patriotism and of familiar values was a ruse for the sheer material interests of a class. This was not a Burkean or communalist conservatism, with its notions of obligation across hierarchical lines. This public philosophy was, in fact, a fraud. And for that reason it was in the process of losing the mandate of heaven even before Iranamok.

But if an authentic public philosophy is inconsistent with the doctrine of greed and with disrespect for the law, it is also inconsistent with a politics that mocks the majority's existential moral sense, its symbols and its institutions. In this way the Democrats, too, have trashed the possibilities of a cohesive public philosophy. Many who did not want to be lured by Reaganism were nevertheless offended by the derision to which traditional social formations such as the family have been submitted. A doctrine of rights without obligations and to no particular purpose but the sheer exercise of those rights has drained our politics of any sense of positive norms and goals. It is a politics of demand and communicates no sense of duty beyond self that is greater than the message of Reaganism.

Furthermore, even at this late date, there is a Jacobin tendency among the Democrats. For the moment its chief polemicist is Jesse Jackson. This tendency likes to read our history solely for its unhappier features, and is inclined to see the nation's adversaries around the world as islands of virtue besieged by the United States. And what it seeks at home, now articulated in pithy epigrams no less simple-minded than Ronald Reagan's, is a decisive transformation of the entire system. Believers in such a gospel are not well suited to the task of creating a philosophy that is at once visionary and realistic.

OF GARY HART it must be said that he gave some genuine thought to issues such as trade and defense where most in his party prefer postures. But if he did not violate the law, as Reagan's men seem relentlessly to have done, he did flout the majority's moral code. It was not his dalliances but his brazenness that offended. As one old friend put it, Hart behaved as if he were "divine and above the rules."

The Greeks were no puritans, as Erich Heller reminds us in his book *In the Age of Prose*. Yet they raised shame to the status of a goddess, whose name was Aidos. To her were attributed decency and dignity in the world. Offenses committed against her were avenged by Nemesis. Our society seems to have lost much of this sense of shame. But Nemesis sometimes makes a surprising appearance, as it did in this case—provoked by an episode best characterized as shameless. Nothing seemed to shame the candidate, which is why those closest to him couldn't stop talking about him and then began to aban-

don him, first psychologically, then politically.

America need not hanker for a restored sense of shame. But it does need, in the age of AIDS, a restored sense of measure and of balance, of limits and of responsibility. It needs to retrieve this sense particularly with reference to how members of our society live their individual lives. This is a part of the desperate need for the public philosophy. Here it is appropriate that the private and public spheres meet. It is just another reason why Gary Hart seemed out of time and out of place—or from the wrong time and from no place. The president surely need not now be a saint or even a paragon. But in America today he can't be a swinger.

NOTEBOOK

□ TALK IS CHEAP:

Progress Seen Toward Arab-Israeli Talks

U.S. Officials Say Jordan Seems Willing to Accept Conference Formula Proposed by Shultz

—*Washington Post*

Prospects dim for early Mideast talks

Jordan moves away from peace talks and PLO role still unclear

—*Christian Science Monitor*

THE PRESS SLUICEGATE

GARY HART HAS now become the first American victim of Islamic justice. He has been politically stoned to death for adultery. The difference is that in Iran, the mullahs do not insult the condemned prisoner by telling him that he is being executed not for adultery but because of "concerns about his character," "questions about his judgment," or "doubts about his candor."

As far as I can determine, Gary Hart is the first presidential candidate, president, prime minister, Cabinet member, congressional committee chairman, party leader, or television evangelist, American or foreign, ever to be destroyed solely because of what David S. Broder, the dean of American political reporters, calls "screwing." In the past, for a public person's private sexual life to be considered a fit subject for exposure in respectable newspapers, some additional factor had to be adduced in order to establish a connection, however tenuous, between the screwing and the screwer's performance of his public duties. At Chappaquiddick a young woman was drowned and the accident was not reported promptly. In the Profumo affair Miss Keeler's other clients included Soviet diplomats. In the Jeremy Thorpe scandal an innocent dog was cold-bloodedly murdered.

But Gary Hart is held to be different, because in Gary

Hart's case "concerns" had been raised about his "character." The business with Donna Rice was said to be part of a pattern. What else was part of this pattern? Well, the name change thing. The age thing. The signature thing. Anything else? No. The list ends there. What all these things have in common is that they are trivial. Character, however, is not trivial. It is the collection of qualities that make one person distinct from another; it is the overall moral pattern of a life and work. Character, by definition, is woven through the total pattern of a person's life; a man does not leave his character at home when he goes to the office. If Gary Hart is a man of bad character, surely the voluminous public record of his actions, decisions, statements, writings, and political maneuvers over the last 15 years must be replete with examples. Those who have condemned his character on the basis of the Donna Rice affair have been quite unable to point to such examples. If character is something that manifests itself solely in a person's private sexual behavior, yet leaves no trace in the rest of his life, including his work life, then "character" is not very important after all—and the sexual details tell us nothing. If character is something that manifests itself in the totality of life, then we don't need the sexual details to discern it.

The fact of Gary Hart's adultery—we must stipulate it for the sake of the argument—is being seen as the philosophers' stone that converts the rest of his life to dross. It certainly did that to his chances of being president. But to regard sexual facts as having a special, magical power of revelation that makes them superior to all other facts as clues to character is a vulgar distortion of psychoanalytic thinking. It's voodoo Freudianism.

The entire political and journalistic community "knew" about Gary Hart's marital infidelities long before the *Miami Herald* staked out his house, as did any intelligent newspaper reader capable of picking up hints and reading between the lines. For this large group of people the *Herald's* tawdry scoop provided absolutely no new information by which to judge Hart's character. The only new information was provided by the manner in which Hart behaved when the catastrophe struck. In the face of what *Time's* Walter Shapiro accurately described as "the most harrowing public ordeal ever endured by a modern presidential contender," Gary Hart showed an iron gut. His fortitude was remarkable, his coolness under fire exemplary, his courage admirable. Before all this happened I too had questions about Hart's character, as I have questions about the characters of all the candidates. But I think rather more highly of his character now than I did before.

GARY HART is held to be different, because in Gary Hart's case "questions" were raised about his "judgment." And it was certainly an error in judgment for him to imagine that he could enter his own house, on a dark street, in the middle of the night, without being observed by reporters hiding in parked cars. Perhaps, given the way the press behaved, it was also an error in judgment for him not to have anticipated what have turned out to be the public consequences of his private life—though that comes peril-

ously close to saying that the fact that he has been destroyed is proof that he deserved to be destroyed. If judgment, not sex, were truly "the issue," as we have been told over and over, then Hart's campaign would still be alive. And the headline in the *New York Post* would have been HART'S JUDGMENT REVEALED AS FAULTY, not GARY'S LOVE BOAT FOLLIES.

Gary Hart is held to be different, because in Gary Hart's case "doubts" were raised about his "candor." The issue is truthfulness, we are told, not adultery: the fact that he lied about his adultery shows he's a liar. The difficulty with this is that lying comes close to being an intrinsic part of adultery. The fact that a person will lie in the context of adultery proves nothing about his general propensity to lie. Whatever one thinks about adultery itself, lying about adultery has less in common with Watergate-style lying than with such social fictions as a habit of saying "Glad to see you" to people whom one is not in fact glad to see. The point is that if Hart is a liar there must be one or two more lies among the millions of words he has spoken as a public man. Let them be produced.

"THIS IS NOT about screwing," David Broder told a Harvard forum last week. "This is about the ability or inability of a candidate to sustain a human relationship over time." If that is what this is about, then it is not immediately apparent why Hart, who for all his personal troubles has been married to the same woman for 28 years, is to be condemned more than the several other candidates who have divorced and remarried. Still, Broder is edging toward the only even remotely persuasive argument that Hart's sexual behavior is relevant enough to his ability to govern. This is what might be called the feminist argument. Writing in *Newsweek*, Suzannah Lessard defended the relevancy of a candidate's adultery as a measure of his "awareness of the dignity and equality of women." Yet even Lessard added that "a candidate's behavior in this respect is significant but not the kind of issue that by itself ought to decide one for or against a candidate." It's worth mentioning, by the way, that no major presidential candidate in American history ever put women in such influential and important posts in his campaigns as did Gary Hart. If Hart is a misogynist of some kind, no hint of it ever carried over into any aspect of his work.

The famous dare Hart put to E. J. Dionne Jr. of the *New York Times*—"If anybody wants to put a tail on me, go ahead"—was both the candidate's biggest mistake and the press's luckiest break. The *Miami Herald's* stakeout was widely rationalized as a response to this challenge—though how a challenge can be taken up before it is issued remains a mystery. (The Miami vice squad was outside Hart's house the night before Dionne's piece was published.) But it is infantile to think that Hart's foolish dare somehow freed the *Herald* from any obligation to decide for itself how it ought to behave. That level of moral reasoning is better suited to a grammar school blacktop than to the newsroom.

The bottom line is that no matter what Gary Hart says, Gary Hart's private life is none of my business, none of your business, and none of the respectable press's business. The

Miami Herald editor who got the tip should have said, "I'm sorry, ma'am, you have the wrong number. You want the *National Enquirer*." The reporter who got the order to do the stakeout should have said, "I'm sorry, sir, but it's more than this job's worth to be a Peeping Tom." And when Gary Hart noticed the carful of men parked in the gloom outside his house, he should have called the police and told them he had reason to believe a Libyan hit squad was shadowing him. A couple of reporters spread-eagle against a fender, surrounded by cruisers with red lights flashing and radios barking, might have done wonders for journalistic ethics.

THE GROSS VIOLATION of the privacy of Gary Hart, Lee Hart, and their children is part of a general degradation of the public sphere and a general weakening of the distinction between the public and the private realms of life in the United States. This is a social phenomenon with many sources—the Reagan administration's delegitimation of public action, the human potential movement's hostility toward "hypocrisy" and exaltation of "authenticity," and the feminists' dictum that the personal is the political, to name three. But none of this justifies the *Miami Herald* and the *Washington Post* any more than the correlation between poverty and crime justifies mugging.

I don't mean this to be a defense of Hart, whose public behavior was in many ways foolish. I do mean it to be an attack on the *Herald* and the *Post*, which deliberately opened a sluice gate that will not be easy to close. The papers are full of assurances that there will be no peeping into other candidates' bedrooms without "probable cause." There was probable cause in Hart's case because (a) many people knew of the rumors of Hart's infidelities; (b) the currency of these rumors constituted presumptive evidence that Hart was recklessly indiscreet; and (c) his presumed indiscretion legitimately "raised questions about his judgment." One might call this the Gossip Standard of Probable Cause. The problem is that Hart is not the only candidate whose "judgment" is called into question by the Gossip Standard. In the current field, for example, I have heard that Candidate A is as notorious a womanizer as Gary Hart, that Candidate B is having an affair with his secretary, that Candidates C and D are involved with members of their staffs, that Candidate E had numerous affairs during his first marriage and got a married woman pregnant, that Candidate F is a homosexual, and that Candidates G and H are adulterers. If I have heard these rumors, thousands, perhaps millions, of others must have heard them too. The Gossip Standard of Probable Cause. I'm confident that the *Herald* and the *Post* will not stoop to going after any of this, but there are many newspapers in this country, and not all of them are so scrupulous. If some fourth-rate paper somewhere does a story, and it moves on the wires, and people start calling radio phone-in shows, and the story gets picked up by a couple of third-rate papers, and "concerns" start getting "raised" . . .

Allah preserve us!

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Howard Raiffa has been at Harvard since 1957 and holds the Frank P. Ramsey Chair in Managerial Economics, jointly sponsored by the Graduate School of Business Administration and the Department of Economics. He is a frequent consultant to industry. As one of the outstanding pioneers of decision analysis, Dr. Raiffa has authored a number of major books on the subject.

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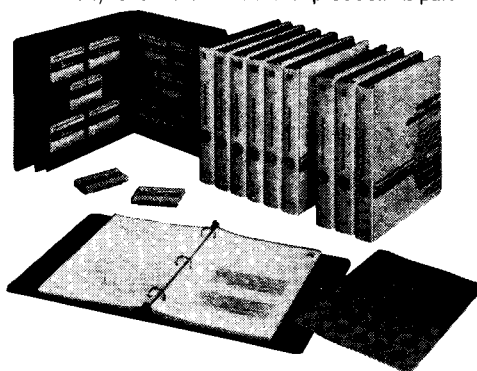
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THE PLAGUE

A FEW MONTHS AGO, the town of Kytera in the Rakai district of southern Uganda was a busy center of commerce. Now it is almost deserted. Most of the merchants have either died of AIDS or fled from it. Most of those walking the dirt streets are children, orphans with both parents dead of AIDS. In the tiny houses and mud huts in the surrounding farm area it is unusual to find a home where AIDS has not struck. In one, I met two sisters with AIDS. Nearby lives a couple, both dying of the disease. Just down the road are a man and wife with seven children. The husband has the disease. On it continues with overwhelming repetition.

In the six years I have been reporting about AIDS, I never imagined it could become so horrible. And this is only the beginning. Barring some highly unlikely event such as the sudden discovery of a successful vaccine, AIDS will kill millions, possibly tens of millions of people in Africa. Whatever our concerns and actions about AIDS in this country, we must prepare to cope with an epidemic in parts of the Third World greater than any in modern times.

The Rakai district of Uganda is on the shore of Lake Victoria near the Tanzanian border. This appears to be the part of the world where AIDS has struck hardest. It may be where the virus first infected man, and the disease is more widespread here simply because it has been here longer. But AIDS will soon be just as rampant elsewhere in Africa. This area is no aberration.

There is ample evidence that the virus has spread already to the major cities of Central and East Africa, infecting large numbers of people. In Kinshasa, Zaire, seven percent of the entire population carries the AIDS virus. Researchers there report that one-fourth of the deaths in the city's main hospital are now from AIDS. Scientists working in Nairobi, Kenya, have watched the number of infected prostitutes climb from four percent in 1980 to more than 60 percent now. In 1980 tests of healthy pregnant women found none infected. Last year two percent of the pregnant women tested positive for the AIDS virus.

I visited a nearby area on the Tanzanian side of the border in late 1985. At that time AIDS was obviously present, but one had to look for the cases. There were a few in the local hospital, most of them truck drivers or other men who traveled, and young, single women, some of them prostitutes. But now it has spread to the local families, destroying the structure of the society. There is no reason to believe this pattern is not repeating itself in many parts of Africa.

Badru Rashid, governor of Rakai province of Uganda, has lost a sister and brother to AIDS in the last six months. He says the first cases appeared in 1979, but only recently have people been dying at a rate so high that "every day there is at least one funeral." He estimates that out of

100,000 people living in the vicinity of Kytera 3,000 have died of AIDS, and he says there have been many times that number of deaths in the rest of the province.

Two hundred miles to the north in Uganda's capital of Kampala one hears a different story. Dr. Samuel Okware, chairman of the government's AIDS committee, says that "Western reporters have always tended to sensationalize the issue of AIDS in Uganda." Dr. Okware insists AIDS did not appear in Uganda until 1982, that it "was introduced from somewhere else," and that there have been only 914 cases so far in the country. "A minor problem compared to the other health problems we face such as malaria and traffic accidents." The AIDS threat has been underestimated ever since scientists first discovered the disease in Africa in 1983. Indeed several countries with huge numbers of AIDS cases deny to this day there is any problem at all. Kenya, supposedly the most democratic of East African nations, has threatened to arrest or expel reporters who simply ask about AIDS. (One reason we were able to visit Uganda is that the government is not yet in firm control and reporters can sometimes sneak by. In most other African countries visiting is not so easy.)

REPORTERS ARE NOT the only objects of retribution. Wilson Carswell, a British surgeon, practiced in Uganda for almost 20 years, treating patients and training young Ugandan doctors. He survived all the political upheaval from Idi Amin on until a few months ago, when the government expelled him for research published in scientific journals about the current rates of infection and his predictions about the danger ahead. Carswell, now in London, fears that AIDS could kill one-third of Uganda's population. "It is difficult," he said, "to comprehend a disaster of such magnitude. It is beyond the scope of one's experience, one's imagination."

The resistance of African governments is in some ways understandable. Many Africans feel that the assertion by American scientists that AIDS originated in African green monkeys is an accusation by whites that Africans are responsible for yet another of the world's problems. In most areas AIDS still is a minor disease compared with the host of bacterial, viral, and parasitic diseases that infect much of the population. But every day the threat is more difficult to ignore. Many governments, while not welcoming reporters, have begun to speak, somewhat honestly, with the World Health Organization and other international organizations. Only late last year did WHO stir from its bureaucratic torpor and declare that AIDS was a major health problem after all. WHO began to search for the money and the means to help the Africans. This raises the question of what, if anything, can be done.

AIDS in Africa is spreading predominantly by heterosexual sex. There is no need to conjure up unusual forms of human behavior or any other means of transmission to explain the massive epidemic. Often people ask about insects. Several epidemiological and laboratory studies have shown that bugs simply do not spread AIDS. Common sense also shows it. Almost every victim one sees is in his

or her sexually active years or has been born with the disease. Insects bite everyone.

Among the many lessons of AIDS in the United States has been that we understand little of our own culture's sexuality, let alone that of others. Sexual practices in Africa vary enormously from tribe to tribe, from country to country, from rural areas to cities. There can be no generalities, but in many parts of Africa and in other countries it is traditional and accepted for people to have several sex partners.

A good example is Haiti, where AIDS appears to be approaching the same epidemic proportions as parts of Africa. Formal marriage is rare. A man will have as many families as he can afford. A woman usually remains faithful to the man who supports her in the arrangement known as "placage." But if the woman feels she is not getting what she wants she will change partners, and it is quite common for women to have children by several men. Haitian society has a web of sexual interactions not unlike those in the gay communities of New York and San Francisco in the late 1970s—a web that allows a sexually transmitted disease to spread rapidly.

Officials in Haiti and several African countries are contemplating or have begun educational campaigns to try to stop the spread of the virus. Posters in Uganda advise people to "Love Carefully" in order to limit the number of sexual partners and to use condoms. It is difficult to know how effective such a campaign will be. In some areas such as places with urban prostitution it could help enormously, but in others it will be tough. The promiscuity of the American gay communities was a recent phenomenon, much easier to change. Often in other countries officials must confront hundreds or thousands of years of tradition. Also, in cultures with no history of birth control, condoms are tough to give away, much less sell.

ONE WAY many lives could be saved quickly would be to screen blood transfusions. Most of the blood transfused in Africa is still not tested for the AIDS virus, and much of it goes to children anemic from malaria. Every day hundreds more are infected. It would not take much effort for the United States and European countries to provide the machines and the training to screen all the blood in Africa and Haiti.

In our chauvinism, we look at all those black people dying and ask: Could that happen here? There is no simple, reassuring answer. Several years of research have shown only that pre-existing, untreated venereal diseases such as herpes and chancroid appear to be making the disease easier to transmit in Africa and Haiti. That and the cultural polygamy are the only differences between them and us. But what may happen here should not be the issue. We should begin now to provide a large part of the world with the financial and technical assistance that will be needed to combat the plague of the 20th century.

ROBERT BAZELL

Robert Bazell is the science correspondent for NBC News.

For the boys, safe sex is no sex.

FEMME IS FATAL

IT WAS TO have been the end of sex, and possibly the beginning of something more suitable for family viewing. Sex had long since been outnumbered by its enemies—the pope, Andrea Dworkin, the mullahs of the Christian Right, the Center for Disease Control—and was looking more bedraggled and unappetizing than it had at any time since the great syphilis epidemic of 1493. Even James Bond, in this summer's incarnation, will be monogamous.

But sometimes the repressed has a way of returning before it has even rounded the corner and gotten out of sight. No sooner had we reached a cultural consensus that the only appropriate venue for heavy breathing is an aerobics class than the sex scandals of '87 broke upon us. One after another, America's fine, clean-limbed, young-looking men succumbed to what had once been known as "the Urge" and looked down to see their careers lying crumpled on the floor along with their boxer shorts.

First, or possibly second, there were the Marines, who may have gotten the idea that—in a geopolitical juncture in which Poland can help out with *contra* aid—it's OK to fraternize with Commie cutie-pies. Then there was Jim Bakker, whom no one will miss except the thousands of pensioners whose PTL contributions turned out to have gone to assorted procurers moonlighting for the Assemblies of God.

But Gary Hart? Here we are talking not only young-looking but actually *new*, as in "new idea" and "neoliberal." The prototypical yuppie. The first person to anticipate the "new abstinence" by thoroughly distancing himself from beef. A man whose biggest problem seemed to be a lack of known emotions. And, for all that, not a half bad candidate, especially since—possibly emboldened by the 1986 elections—he had begun tossing around incendiary phrases such as "equal rights," "social justice," and even "arms control" without crossing his fingers behind his back. The question is, and the press deserves credit for identifying it so readily . . . the question is, what is the issue here?

By last Tuesday night, only two days after the emergence of Donnatgate and a few hours after the media had unanimously judged the Contragate hearings "boring," 5,000 or so folks responded to a plea for judgments from Miami's Channel 10. Seventy percent thought the *Miami Herald* had overstepped. Which, in an oblique way, could be taken as a sign that they didn't care what the candidate did on his night off. On the other hand, 703 people responded to *USA Today's* first speak-in and 70 percent thought Hart had done wrong. The following day's edition of the *Herald* urged readers to call one of two 800 numbers to vote "fair" or "unfair" about the *Herald's* coverage

and offered "30 seconds to tell us what you think." If this sort of electronic trivialization of the political process keeps up, it is not unimaginable that Vanna White will soon be seen shimmering across the stage in search of the definitive C-word—will it be "candidate" or "cheater"? Which is not an unreasonable approach to political decision-making in an age when the press doesn't know what it thinks until it knows what the public thinks of what it thinks.

The *Miami Herald* marked time on Monday with a stern editorial that apparently relied on 19th-century guides to etiquette for inspiration: "A married man who is concerned for his reputation and his wife's feelings does not have dinner at a married friend's home with two attractive, unmarried younger women while both men's wives are out of town. Nor does he take a woman who is neither a relative nor a business associate to his own home alone late of an evening. Of these facts there is—or certainly should be—no doubt." And, it is not "usual for married men to 'relax' by dining in private with single women. . . . The man who takes such risks is at best a fool, if not actually a cheat." Not a word about who might have given the *Herald* the anonymous tip-off, or why.

Ah Mencken, where are you now that we need you? Miss Manners, where is your stinging wit? Who will drag this debate into the 20th century, the late 20th century? The age of self-actualization, of gender equality, of working women. "Single woman" is not, for example, an automatic euphemism for "slut." A dinner, even a "relaxing" dinner, is not categorically the same thing as a roll in the hay. At the end of that line of thought lies purdah—and not unimportantly, a complete absence of women working in political campaigns, corporations, or mixed-sex situations of any kind.

There is also something singularly anachronistic about the word "womanizer," which had been attached to Hart well before there was any actual woman in sight. The hip, modern phrase—as anyone who has ever been to a support group knows—is "sexual compulsive." The upscale, voting constituency Hart claimed as his own might have responded well to a pained and baffled admission of sexual addiction, a brief retreat to the Betty Ford clinic (the Ford administration's most important legacy), and a re-emergence accompanied by claims of growth and personal insight. Hart, alas, seemingly caught behind the times in the grip of a Freudian death wish, missed his cue.

BUT THE MOST serious anachronism in the entire affair may lie in the imagery rather than in the stray and disputed facts. Most of the press has chosen to go with a Dreiser theme, suggestive of furtive assignments in exit-ramp motels. But this will hardly do for a candidate who has located himself in the Aspen-Miami-Bimini triangle (on a yacht named Monkey Business no less). Tammany Hall is dead; Miami Vice lives. The real image, the inadmissible metaphor, is of those frequent fliers who appear in first class seats wearing Rolex

watches, alligator loafers, and no socks: the arbitrageurs, the Boesky-ettes, the "political fund-raisers," Wall Street coke-heads, and other mysterious travelers through the go-for-it and get-it-before-it's-gone society. The problem, whether it's North or Hart or even Bakker is the hubris of the high roller, the euphoria of the fast track.

If it's hard to feel sympathy for the fading candidate, neither is it easy to get behind his adversary, the press. Having failed entirely to notify the public that Ronald Reagan was not at the helm, the media seem determined to knock off the next president in advance. Iranamok and Gary Hart, despite the glee on the network news, are not stories of equal weight. And if they were, common balance requires that someone mention *The Search for the Real Nancy Reagan*, the newly released biography by Frances Spatz Leighton that clearly implies that the president had a long-standing "personal relationship" with his assistant Helene Van Damm, who was rewarded with an ambassadorship in Austria. Not to mention the suspiciously short interval between the Reagan nuptials and the birth of their first embarrassing child, Patti Davis.

But enough of that! What seems to be going on is a hysterical retreat into the most ancient explanatory device in the history of post-matriarchal society: *cherchez la femme*. Woman as the source of all trouble. Woman as sexual snare dragging down into ruin strong, firm-jawed men.

AFTER ALL, Donna Rice is not the first distraction we have been offered. Upon the first revelations of hoards deposited in Swiss bank accounts, the evening news was taken over by Fawn Hall. At the most crucial moment of revelation, linking the Reagan administration to the entire illicit commerce in guns and hostages, all media attention suddenly focused on Nancy Reagan's push to power. Just as the arms talks were about to stumble forward from the wreckage of Reykjavik, there was Violetta and her team of Soviet sirens.

Sex, whether as relaxation, snare, or even reproductive function, is clearly not dead. But it is, as we need no reminding these days, clearly not safe. Perhaps that ominous fact explains the primitive subtextual imagery underlying the present overblown coverage of what are, after all, sex scandals of a fairly routine sort. Underneath the electronic brouhaha there is a faint beat of drums, an unconscious echo of puberty rites and purification huts, an anxious reclassification of women as Woman, the polluter of clear masculine minds. Tribal warriors eschewed connubial relations before a battle, and modern men in public life may soon be required to demonstrate an immunity from women far greater than anything vulcanized rubber can provide.

BARBARA EHRENREICH AND JANE O'REILLY

Barbara Ehrenreich and Jane O'Reilly are a political commentary team operating out of New York and Key West.

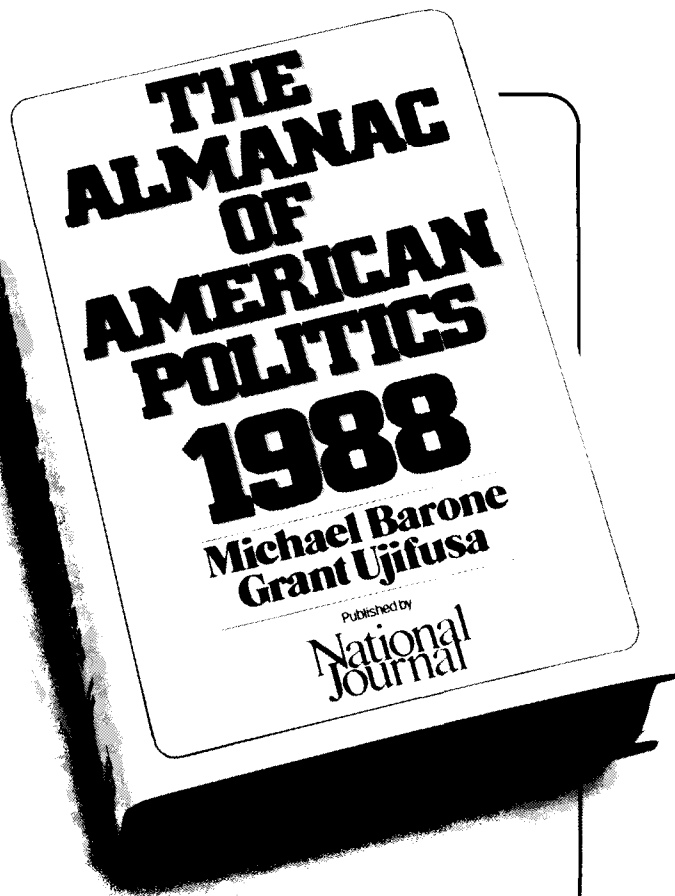
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**National
Journal**
 What the Leaders Read.

18 A

The Democrats' great communicator.

RONALD BIDEN

BY FRED BARNES

SENATOR JOSEPH BIDEN doesn't buy the analogy, but the more his aides describe him and sketch out his strategy for winning the presidency in 1988 and governing the country, the more he sounds like Ronald Reagan. The ideology is different—Biden is a Democrat from Delaware with liberal views on most everything but busing, federally funded abortions, and the Grenada invasion—but the styles are similar. Among Democratic presidential candidates, he stands alone as the great communicator, the fellow with the inspirational speech, the fervent salesman of himself.

Biden's advisers tout him as if they've all read from the same set of talking points. "The distinguishing feature of Joe's candidacy and his presidency is his ability to move and motivate people," says Tim Ridley, who will be campaign manager when Biden announces he's running on June 9. "Biden's different from the others because he's got the ability to speak, to motivate people and convince them he can win," says Bill Daley, son of the late Chicago mayor and the campaign's political director. "He is demonstrating a capacity to inspire people to become politically active," adds John Marttila, a Boston media consultant who's been advising Biden for 15 years. "He does get the juices flowing," insists Mark Siegel, a Washington political consultant and Democratic National Committee member.

The Reagan analogy doesn't end there. Like Reagan, Biden has his own mythical past. Instead of Reagan's small-town America, Biden talks up the 1960s as an era of political heroes. In speech after speech, Biden has cited President Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy as "dreamers" who inspired the nation. "In 1988 we mark the 25th anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy," Biden said last January in what has become his standard speech. "And it stands exactly 20 years from 'the year of the locust'—1968—Tet, Chicago, Nixon's election, and the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. Twenty years of darkness and confusion separate that fateful year from 1988, and for many in our generation, the interval has seemed an almost biblical wandering in the wilderness for America."

Biden has a taste for big ideas and a tendency toward demagoguery. Reagan sees Western civilization hanging everywhere in the balance. Biden sees watersheds everywhere. "We are about to be thrust inevitably, inexorably, into a period of watershed decisions," he told a Maryland audience on January 9. He entitled a speech in Houston in April "America at the Watershed of History." And to

California Democrats, he condensed the 1988 election to "one great issue: Will America remain the master of its own destiny in the year 2000?" He was wildly applauded. Reagan made the welfare queen the symbol of the America he promised to supplant. Biden has made Ivan Boesky, the practitioner of unbridled greed, the symbol of "Ronald Reagan's America [where] the standard has been wealth, economic success, and personal gain—the bottom line."

On one point, Biden concedes he and Reagan are alike. This is their view of the president as leader of society as well as government, as someone who must change "people's attitudes" in addition to enacting legislation. Biden's list of presidents who pursued this dual role includes Lincoln, Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Kennedy. "Reagan did come into office with a clear vision of where he wanted people to move attitudinally in this country," says Biden. In a speech in Philadelphia on May 15, Biden said a president must be able to mobilize America behind new patterns of work and behavior. He said he'd try to persuade business leaders to emulate the example of successful companies such as Ford and Federal Express, to promote day care, to convince schoolchildren to do their homework and skip watching TV.

Reagan's journey to the presidency began with a passionate speech (the 1964 television address in support of Barry Goldwater). So did Biden's. The Biden speech, drafted under the guidance of pollster Patrick Caddell, was first delivered in September 1983 to a convention of New Jersey Democrats. It was full of cheap shots and gimmicks, but it did have a soaring theme and a generational message. The idealism that gripped young voters in the 1960s and made them Democrats has slipped away, said Biden, who is 44. "The cynics believe that my generation, having reached the conservative age of mortgage payments, pediatrician bills, and concern about our children's welfare, are ripe for Republican picking. These experts believe that, like the Democratic Party itself, the less-than-40-year-old voters are prepared to sell their souls for some security, real or illusory. They have misjudged us. Just because our political heroes were murdered does not mean that the dream does not still live, buried in our broken hearts."

Biden drew an incredibly emotional response, including some weeping, and he repeated the speech to other Democratic groups. Now he's updated the speech for the 1988 campaign. In the new version, Biden tosses in some specifics—he criticizes Star Wars and calls for a longer

school year—but the speech is largely thematic. America is adrift, Biden says, but a young generation is waiting to be summoned to great deeds. The speech literally soars. Biden says the Kennedy brothers and King gave him “a soaring sensation. And I still feel it when I hear them in my heart. And I hear them every time I hear the Communion hymn in my [Catholic] church that is based on the 91st Psalm.” The psalm talks of being raised up “on eagle’s wings.” That, says Biden, is “how I want to feel again. . . . It’s time to hear the sound of our country soaring and singing in the dawn of a new day. It’s time to restore America’s soul. It’s time to be on the march again. It’s time to get America moving again. And, quite, simply, our time has come.”

If this sounds like a general election speech, that’s because it is. Biden’s appeal is not primarily to issue activists, who are influential in presidential nominations. Democratic presidential candidates have often been captured by these activists, become identified as tools of special interests, and wound up as losers in the general election, he says. Biden appeals to the larger mass of voters in the baby boom generation (born since 1946) who will make up nearly 60 percent of the 1988 electorate but haven’t been very politically active. He is gambling that enough of them will turn out for the Democratic caucuses and primaries. Even if they don’t, he argues, it wouldn’t be worth the trouble to pander to special interests to get the nomination. “If you begin to yield to those kinds of interests and purity tests, you can guarantee you’re not going to be president of the United States,” he says. “I’d rather lose the nomination. I’m not in this for the honor of being the nominee.” Not that Biden won’t take a stand on some issues. In his May 15 speech, he attacked the protectionist amendment of Representative Richard Gephardt of Missouri, a rival presidential candidate. But a series of issue speeches this spring designed to give his campaign an ideological framework—on the economy, trade, poverty, foreign policy, education—is chiefly thematic. The trade speech ends with a reference to John F. Kennedy and a call to get the nation moving again.

Caddell had a hand in the speeches, as he has in the campaign strategy and nearly everything else in Biden’s political career. The strategy, made public in a 92-page document written in late 1986 by Caddell, casts Biden as “an inside insurgent,” a candidate like Kennedy in 1960

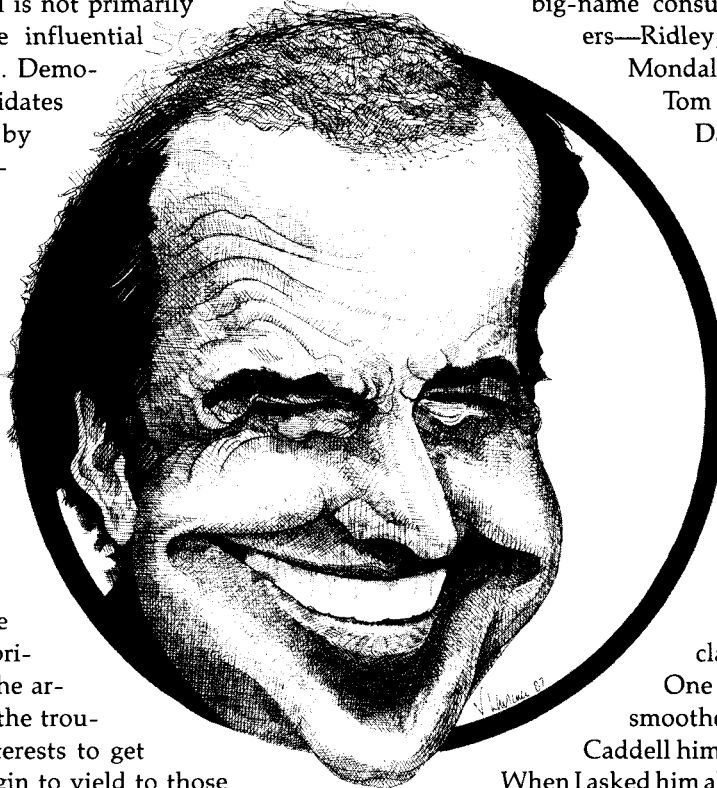
“who is an insurgent, somewhat anti-establishment, who represents change and yet is able to have real inside party support from political leaders, activists, and elected officials.” Such a candidate can “reach the baby boom generation cohorts” without alienating other voters. To do this, the candidate needs a national message and the ability “to give thematic expression to it.” The candidate must personify “broad mainstream values” (Biden calls himself a “regular Joe”). And a candidate who is “difficult to isolate ideologically” and whose views have “eclectic appeal” has an advantage, Caddell wrote. “He’s not a knee-jerk liberal, a big spender, or an isolationist,” says Siegel.

Caddell may be a brilliant strategist, but he is also a problem for Biden. The campaign is studded with big-name consultants and political managers—Ridley, Marttila, Daley, former Mondale advisers John Reilly and Tom Donilon, and media expert David Doak—and some of them don’t get along with Caddell. The plan is for Doak to produce the TV spots, but he and his partner, Robert Shrum, had a falling-out with Caddell after the three formed a consulting business in 1985. Shrum has stayed out of the Biden campaign partly because Caddell is in. Last year, Doak and Shrum worked with Caddell on several state races, and Caddell claimed they paid him too little.

One story has it that Biden smoothed things over by paying off Caddell himself. Biden doesn’t deny this.

When I asked him about it, he said I should talk to Shrum, Doak, and Caddell. Shrum says the matter was “satisfactorily resolved.” Caddell didn’t return my call. With his lineup of heavyweight advisers, Biden admits that there’s more than usual likelihood for squabbling. But he says, “I don’t take any malarkey from anybody in my campaigns. I’m my own chief strategist and everybody understands that.”

No matter what other Democrats say, Biden insists on being upbeat about voters. He recalls the lament of former Senator Thomas Eagleton of Missouri at a Democratic dinner following the 1984 election. “The real message was that the reason why we Democrats lost was the American people had become cold, heartless folks who don’t care about much of anything. My view has been consistently that this is simply not true. They haven’t lost their sense of compassion and caring.” Biden says he won’t join other Democrats in “voter bashing.” That’s not his style, or Reagan’s. □



The Eagle Scout as deal-maker.

GEPHARDT'S INSIDE MOVES

BY MORTON KONDRACKE

ONE OF THE Democratic Party's best policy analysts says of Richard Gephardt, "His virtues are that he's a deal-maker, he's well liked, honest and clean, has a sense of the possible, he's patient and respectful. He measures up to the rest of the Boy Scout motto."

But?

"But, when ever has he gone against his constituency, the caucus voters of Iowa? Dick Gephardt is a politician at a time when this country needs something more than a politician. Being an insider, a blow-dried Walter Mondale, is not what's called for."

This issues expert is one of countless Democrats who are yearning for Senator Bill Bradley to enter the presidential race—"He's a man of conviction, which Dick Gephardt isn't," he says—and is demoralized with the field of candidates that is running. This expert also neatly encapsulates the current rap on Gephardt: a talented politician, but merely that.

Actually, at 46, Dick Gephardt is a very talented politician and may be more than that. Besides having a winning personality—he wasn't just a Boy Scout, but an Eagle Scout—Gephardt is shrewd and tireless, gifted in understanding where various political vectors are converging and getting there ahead of everyone else. After the 1980 Democratic debacle, he was a leader in various House efforts to develop post-New Deal "new ideas" for the party. After the 1984 debacle, he became the first chairman of the Democratic Leadership Council, a similar effort additionally designed to build party strength among moderates in the South and West.

Gephardt did not invent tax reform, but the man who did—Bill Bradley—selected Gephardt to co-sponsor it because he was on the House Ways and Means Committee, was receptive to the concept, and would work hard to help sell it around the country. And just as Bradley-Gephardt was the lead measure on taxes, it's Kennedy-Gephardt on health care cost containment and Harkin-Gephardt on farm legislation. And on trade, which figures to be one of the major issues of the 1988 election, the measure that everyone's wrangling about is the Gephardt amendment. No one can ask, as often happened with Gary Hart and does now with Joe Biden, "What legislation bears his name?"

Nor can it be said that Gephardt doesn't have the support of his colleagues in Congress. He got to be House Democratic caucus chairman by volunteering for time-consuming jobs—vote counting and deal brokering—and by consulting every one of his 253 fellow Democrats. Now

that he's running for president, 70 of them have formally endorsed him—a few in hopes he will be out of their way in the race for Speaker—and about 20 are paying him the highest compliment by lending him their fund-raising machinery. Some, including House Ways and Means Chairman Dan Rostenkowski, have campaigned for Gephardt in Iowa. About 80 percent of the Congress will be Democratic convention delegates. The race to get that bloc is sometimes called "the first primary." In that contest, Gephardt is clearly the front-runner.

He is also doing well in Iowa, where some 100,000 Democratic activists will caucus next February 8 and anoint a real front-runner. Gephardt's own polls—taken before Hart's withdrawal and tightly screened for likely caucus attendees—showed Hart's support in the mid-30s, those of Gephardt and former Arizona governor Bruce Babbitt in the mid-teens, and Jesse Jackson's at seven percent. Gephardt, who has been to Iowa about 30 times in the last two years, has the advantage of being able to make news, as he did with the Gephardt amendment and continuing action on farm legislation.

Gephardt used to be a boring speaker, as even his own supporters acknowledge. But, as with everything else in his life, he's worked to improve. At a recent candidate cattle show in Des Moines, Gephardt was at least as stirring as Biden, supposedly the Democrats' star speaker. Basically, he paints a picture of America in danger of decline, "faced with the toughest competition we have ever faced" from Japan, South Korea, and other trade rivals, but capable of meeting it by "having people who are productive and trained and skilled and strong and make the highest quality products at the lowest cost." In his announcement speech February 23, written by former Kennedy adviser Bob Shrum, Gephardt sounded the theme "Make America First Again," and he continues it on the stump, pledging that as John Kennedy set a goal of putting a man on the moon within a decade, his is to have "the best educated people on the face of the earth."

Besides education, Gephardt says that better management and worker-motivation practices (imported from Japan) will help make America productive again. He always refers to the General Motors-Toyota plant in Fremont, California, which went from being defect-ridden and GM's least efficient plant to being its best by giving workers more power and responsibility, and making managers more responsive and less perk-conscious.

He also links himself with the theme of upward mobility and opportunity, describing how his parents—a milk truck

driver and a legal secretary—had to quit school but “still saw hope, still saw opportunity” and “worked and saved so my brother and I could have the education they never had.” On the front porch of their bungalow in St. Louis, he says, “They talked to us about working hard, being honest, doing good, aiming high. The air was hot and muggy, but it was full of dreams. America was on the move.” And Gephardt says to inevitable cheers, “I want the next generation to dream those dreams. I want to see America on the move again.”

His parents’ values of honesty and obeying laws also give him the opportunity to rap the Reagan administration for side-stepping restrictions on aid to the Nicaraguan *contras* that Congress enacted. “Those aren’t my values and they aren’t yours,” he says. Always a foe of *contra* policy, Gephardt recently took a lead role in trying to stop aid to the *contras*, a popular stand in Iowa.

Finally, among Gephardt’s political strengths is an aura of clean Midwesternism. He went to Northwestern and the University of Michigan Law School, was neither a soldier in Vietnam nor an anti-war activist. He served in the Air National Guard and came up in politics through the St. Louis City Council. He has a moderate to conservative record on social issues (against abortion, busing, and new gun controls) and a stable family life. He introduces himself and his pretty, blond wife at campaign stops as “the Dick and Jane show,” and yet their pure sunniness is tempered by the experience of a long (apparently successful) battle that their son, Matt, waged against cancer. “Everybody in Iowa knows a Dick Gephardt,” one politician said. “He was president of their high school class.”

But?

But Gephardt, for all his virtues, is getting heavily criticized by columnists, editorial writers, and some fellow pols for being a raw opportunist and interest-group panderer, and by others (including some House colleagues) for being a pure tactician and pragmatist without a presidential-quality gyroscope. Their evidence is that whatever Gephardt needs to do to please constituent groups, he’s done. As representative from a socially conservative St. Louis district, he was sponsor of a constitutional amendment to ban abortion. Now that he’s running for the nomination of a party whose feminist interest group demands a pro-choice position, he’s off the amendment, though he’s still against federal funding of abortion. Gephardt says he

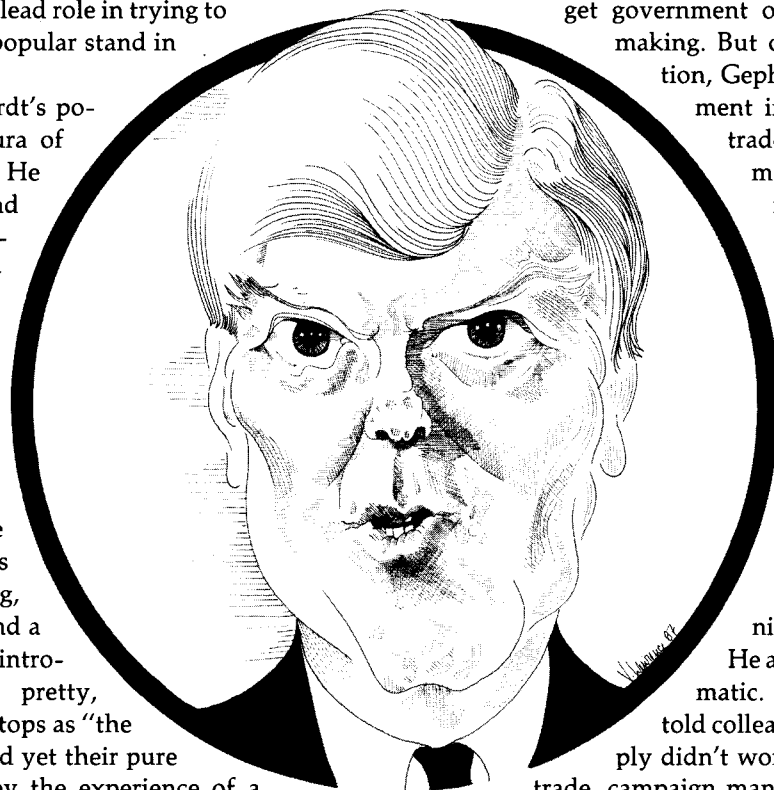
switched because the amendment was never going to pass and because the furor over it was preventing the building of coalitions to fight teenage pregnancy through birth control and sex education.

Similar charges arise over health, trade, and farm legislation. Gephardt first came to the attention of his colleagues in 1979, when along with David Stockman he beat the Carter administration on hospital cost containment by arguing that competition between providers was a better way to cut costs than heavy government regulation. In that case, Gephardt was allied with the AMA and hospital groups. Now, the Kennedy-Gephardt bill provides for heavy government regulation, and he is allied with more populous interest groups such as the aged and consumers.

Similarly, tax reform is a free market device designed to get government out of economic decision-making. But on trade and farm legislation, Gephardt wants to get government in—and in a big way. His trade bill would impose automatic restrictions on imports if countries accused of unfair trade practices maintained large trade surpluses with the United States. His farm bill, popular in hard-pressed Iowa and the South, would reschedule farm debt and impose mandatory quotas on farm production in order to raise prices.

Gephardt naturally denies charges of pandering. He argues that he is being pragmatic. On health, Gephardt has told colleagues that competition simply didn’t work to hold down costs. On trade, campaign manager Bill Carrick said that Gephardt and labor have different aims. “They wanted a much harsher bill with less discretion. They do not want to open up markets overseas, but protect American markets from competition.” Gephardt insists that the Japanese are culturally and politically “immature” and “corrupt,” prevented by farmers and industries from practicing free trade. Faced with the threat of losing American markets, he says, “they will open up.”

On farm legislation, Gephardt claims to combine compassion with pragmatism. On an airplane hop in South Dakota, he said, “These [family farmers in trouble] are the hardest working people in America. They are not in trouble because they’re lazy, but because land values have collapsed and so have commodity prices through no fault of theirs.” He claims that his debt relief and production controls are temporary measures, though he acknowledges that it will take mercantilist agreements with other grain-producing countries to keep



the United States from being flooded with foreign grain and U.S. farmers from being priced out of international markets.

GEPHARDT IS far too subtle—and his record is too mixed—to be simply dismissed as a panderer. He has opposed labor in the past on the minimum wage (though he's for an increase now) and on taxing fringe benefits. He once favored cost-of-living freezes for Social Security recipients (he's now for getting Social Security out of the federal budget). His farm policy obviously risks offending consumer groups because of increased food prices. And he acknowledges that if his trade program doesn't blast open foreign markets, consumers will pay more for everything.

Although he does not talk about it too loudly, Gephardt's program also involves major tax increases to balance the federal budget within five years and pay for his "crusade" to improve American education. Over time, he says, he wants to raise taxes from 18.5 percent of GNP to 21 percent or 22 percent, a \$90 billion increase in today's economy. Gephardt's specific tax proposals do not seem adequate to the task. He favors a five-dollar-a-barrel oil import fee, excise taxes, increases in the minimum tax rate, further loophole closing, and unspecified new taxes on upper-income taxpayers.

Gephardt would make minor savings in domestic spending but vastly increase education expenses. He said in a New York speech that the federal government should "ensure that every American child has access to a first-rate education—from kindergarten through college." He wants to increase the school year, pay teachers more, reduce class size, "inundate our schools with the most advanced technologies," and eliminate disparities in per-pupil expenditure. There is not an item in the program that will displease the National Education Association—no merit pay, deregulation of teacher-certification procedures, voucher plans, or requirements for post-certification testing. Gephardt says the plan won't work unless teachers are fully involved.

Besides tax increases to pay for his program, Gephardt favors defense cuts of \$40 billion over three years. Even though he claims that "tough negotiations" will have to be conducted with the Soviets, he lists the strategic weapons he wants to get rid of or slow down, including the Stealth bomber, the MX missile, possibly the Trident II missile (which peace groups are trying to make a Democratic litmus test in Iowa)—and, of course, Star Wars, which Gephardt favors confining to research at about half its present cost. As opposed to Ronald Reagan's evil empire strategy toward the Soviets—"we should bleed them to death"—Gephardt favors "bringing them into the Western world, moderating the more objectionable features of their police state, and getting them interested in economics in place of military competition."

He believes that Americans have given foreign affairs too much mystique. He said, "We should think about

other countries as we do of local politics. The people running these other countries are just like us—politicians. When I met [Egypt's president] Mubarak, he reminded me of a ward leader in St. Louis." Is Gorbachev similarly motivated? "Absolutely," he said, indicating he thinks that development is Gorbachev's highest priority. Clearly, Gephardt knows nothing about Leninist ideology, which makes hegemony the holy grail.

In general, Gephardt's foreign policy views track those of most post-Vietnam era House Democrats. He opposed military aid to El Salvador even after Napoleón Duarte became president, but favors it now. He favors negotiations as the first means of keeping Nicaragua from spreading its revolution, then economic sanctions, and lastly military force. He ended up supporting both the Grenada invasion and the Libyan bombing. Asked whom he listens to for foreign policy advice, he named such "Cyrus Vance alumni" as Richard Holbrooke, Anthony Lake, Marshall Shulman, and Robert Hunter, plus House colleagues Stephen Solarz, Lee Hamilton, and former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger. He is clearly fascinated with the Japanese, simultaneously afraid and admiring. That's good, if he keeps insisting that America has to improve to keep up. The danger is that fear, or political pragmatism, will lead him to make Japan into an enemy, transferring the hostility that Americans formerly have felt toward the imperialist Soviet Union onto a democratic ally.

So far, this isn't a problem. Gephardt says in his speeches that "the United States is the only country in the world that is trying to be first in economic competition and first in military power." He does not say we should stop trying to do both, but that doing so will require that the United States be "excellent." In an interview he said that "in my heart of hearts, I don't know if we can pull this off, working against people who are making 75 cents an hour. The challenge is very great and we are up against people who are fascinated with the manufacturing process, and we no longer are. We've got to try to get back again, though, or church is out. If we aren't economically strong, we can't be militarily strong, either."

GEPHARDT CLEARLY is a man who has thought about president-sized issues even as he has been tending to horse trades in the House. A former Reagan administration official who has negotiated with him says, too, that beneath the Eagle Scout exterior is "a steely character." He explained that, in comparison to Bill Bradley, "Gephardt is exceedingly realistic about tactics and strategy, has a better political network, and is a better coalition-builder. Who would I rather have be my kid's godparent? Bradley. But, as president, negotiating with Gorbachev? Dick Gephardt."

The best thing for the Democratic Party would be for Bradley to run and let us find out who's better and tougher. Unfortunately, of the two, Gephardt is all we've got. □

MAXIMUM FEASIBLE CONTAINMENT

BY JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

THE IRAN/CONTRA scandal has prompted an intellectual offensive against the Reagan Doctrine and the very notion of an ideologically animated foreign policy. Thus far the assault has been clearer in its denunciations than in its recommendations for new strategies purged of ideological excess. Yet certain dominant themes can be discerned. What they add up to is a new conservative isolationism.

I use the adjective "conservative" to distinguish these views from the liberal isolationism that followed the Vietnam War. Then, the impetus for disengagement was the conviction that America was a malign force in the world. The idea now is that engagement will be harmful to America. Just as many of the voices in this chorus are not conservative, some are not isolationist. Yet this is where their arguments are bound to lead, for it is hard to see any other currently feasible alternative to the Reagan Doctrine.

The term "Reagan Doctrine" was coined to give coherence to Reagan's inchoate impulse to make America "stand tall again." The administration's policy had evolved as the administration came to see the Nicaraguan rebels as contestants for power rather than merely an instrument to harass the Sandinistas. The administration also embraced Jonas Savimbi's struggle in Angola and eventually recognized that these conflicts, like those in Cambodia and Afghanistan, provided the basis for its new strategy.

Reagan had made it clear he intended to eschew both Jimmy Carter's national self-abnegation and the accommodations of Henry Kissinger's détente. But although he called America's Vietnam War "a noble cause," neither he nor anyone else was prepared to return to the policy of containment, under which America sought to ensure, by force if necessary, that no additional countries would go Communist. Rebels in Nicaragua and Angola permitted a new global strategy: although some countries might fall to communism, this could be counterbalanced by overthrowing Communist regimes elsewhere.

What can be offered in place of the Reagan Doctrine? Surely not a return to containment. Although in spirit more venturesome than containment, the Reagan Doctrine is far less ambitious in practice. The former entailed sending a half million men to Southeast Asia; the latter requires sending a few million dollars to Central America. A public unwilling to sustain the latter will not for a moment countenance the former. Nor are people prepared for a return to

Carteresque national penitence. The very depth of Reagan's fall reveals how much the public has come to approve the unapologetic posture that people thought Reagan represented.

Nor is there much prospect of a return to Kissingerian détente, which offers sticks as well as carrots. Kissinger's "sticks" consisted of covert military aid to the likes of Savimbi, and massive military aid along with the use of American air power in places such as Indochina. Why should the country accept in the name of détente the kinds of foreign entanglements it rejects under the Reagan Doctrine?

What do critics of the doctrine propose? Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan argues, "It is time for America to tend to economic resources. . . . Political economy is the name of the next task, not geopolitics." He acknowledges that "between now and the year 2000 between four and 11 [new Leninist] regimes will come to power." But he argues that we may view such developments with a measure of equanimity because "the one enormous fact of the third quarter of the 20th century . . . is the near complete collapse of Marxism as an ideological force in the world."

While Moynihan calls us home to repair our economy, others fret about our political system. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. writes that "Vietnam and Iran/Nicaragua were the direct consequences of global messianism," which threatens to "burst . . . the limits of our present constitution." The remedy is a "prudent balance-of-power foreign policy confined to vital interests of the United States." He appeals for "the revival of realism, sobriety, and responsibility in the conduct of foreign affairs." A recent lead article in *Foreign Policy* expresses the hope that the next administration will "stop feeding the international illusions of the American public and . . . expose it instead to the finite nature of what foreign policy can accomplish."

Ironies abound in these criticisms. "Realism" is the theory that argues that the behavior of states is governed by their inherent interests more than by the voluntary choices or ideals of statesmen. The essential rule is that geography is destiny. The decision to sell arms to Khomeini was the administration's quintessential act of foreign policy "realism" and a betrayal of the ideological tenets of its foreign policy. Iran's oil and its strategic location between the U.S.S.R. and the Persian Gulf were deemed more important than the principle of not yielding to terrorist blackmail.

In U.S. foreign policy, "balance of power" can only mean counterbalancing the power of the Soviet Union. As the

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Kremlin extends the reach of its empire to four continents, the Reagan Doctrine *is* a balance-of-power policy. It is hard to take comfort in Moynihan's assurance that communism has collapsed ideologically when in the same breath he predicts a new Communist takeover every one to three years.

THE CROWNING IRONY is the conservative tone and spirit of these liberal critiques. But liberals are not the only ones acting out of character. Whether they realize it or not, conservatives who support the Reagan Doctrine are supporting a policy that is profoundly unconservative.

One conservative who has seen this clearly is Robert W. Tucker, co-editor of the *National Interest*, who argues:

While freedom is the highest of political values, this does not make its universalization a proper interest of foreign policy in the sense that its pursuit justifies the sacrifice of blood and treasure. There are many things of value that are not the proper interests of foreign policy. Conservatives, despite their deep attachment to liberty, should be the first to recognize this.

To those who argue, as does Tucker's colleague Irving Kristol, that "the basic conflict of our times—that between the U.S.S.R. and the United States—is ideological," Tucker replies: "The ideological contest with the Soviet Union has largely been won." Tucker acknowledges the perdurance of geopolitical, as opposed to ideological, contest, but even here he believes the United States is comfortably ahead and could get by with limited or selective containment.

There are signs that other conservatives are beginning to entertain doubts about current policy. Paul Weyrich called recently upon conservatives to begin "thinking deeply and carefully about America's role in the world":

In pursuit of containment, we still thrust ourself into everything that happens around the world. But what we put forward, increasingly, is weakness, not strength. In a world where we control far less of the total sum of power than we did 40 years ago, we cannot do otherwise. The real strength is no longer there. We are propping up a hollow facade, vast commitments unsupported by either capabilities or popular will.

Kristol, writing about human rights, reiterated that the U.S.-Soviet competition is an "ideological conflict," but argued that it is nonetheless

both a simplification and a distortion to describe it as a conflict about "human rights." It is, rather, a conflict over the very definition of "human rights," and the point of this conflict is to determine who will have the *power* to define "human rights" for future generations. In that sense, the United States cannot evade the urgencies and the ambiguities of "power politics."

It is "quixotically futile to criticize [the Soviet Union] for not sharing our traditional-liberal political philosophy." He finds it quixotic, too, to try to foster democracy in Third World countries ruled by traditional authoritarian dictatorships. What Kristol seems to be saying is that although the U.S.-Soviet conflict is motivated by ideology, it cannot be waged with ideological weapons, but only with real ones. Efforts to promote the democratic idea will have little part in it.

Thus liberals offer nothing but empty conservative pieties: prudence, pragmatism, balance of power, sobriety, and above all "realism." Paralyzed by their suspicions of power and of national self-assertiveness, they have been unable to come to terms with the fact that every cherished liberal value, be it liberty, democracy, peace, or national independence, depends ultimately upon American power. Conservatives, on the other hand, have an unconservative strategy, the Reagan Doctrine, which makes America the sponsor of revolutions.

It also deepens the inherent conflict between the conservative's distrust of strong government and his wish for a strong defense. The Reagan Doctrine implies a degree of government activism that goes beyond maintaining a military establishment. To win, we will have to do more than arm anti-Communist rebels. We will have to train them; help them develop political organizations and strategies; teach them the art of public relations and to launch social welfare programs in liberated areas. In short, social engineering.

It is easy to understand why it took so long for this administration to stumble onto the Reagan Doctrine, and why so many of its key promoters have political roots outside conservatism—including Jeane Kirkpatrick, Elliott Abrams, and Ronald Reagan. It was doubtless the natural conservatism of many of Reagan's advisers that made them discourage him from spending political capital on this issue, leading to the congressional ban on aid to the Nicaraguan rebels in 1984. When that ban came, it was perhaps also a natural conservatism that led to reliance on contributions from Saudi Arabia and other secret donors rather than any attempt to launch a public, grass-roots movement of non-governmental support for the rebels, much as the left raises funds for the Nicaraguan government and the Salvadoran guerrillas.

KRISTOL, Weyrich, Tucker, Schlesinger, and Moynihan are an unlikely united front. But what they share suggests a foreign policy alternative to the Reagan Doctrine. This alternative will eschew ideological commitment in favor of invocations of "the national interest." It will seek to scale back foreign commitments, and perhaps to play down foreign affairs altogether in favor of domestic concerns. Yet it will avoid the breast-beating anti-Americanism of 1970s liberals, and will even insist, at least in rhetoric and perhaps in reality, on maintaining a strong military. Almost any candidate in 1988 in either party could adopt this stance.

But it will not make good strategy. Since World War II we have faced an ideologically hostile superpower bent on global pre-eminence. Containment compiled a mixed record in responding to that challenge before collapsing in Vietnam. Détente, whether the muscular Kissinger kind or the limp Carter kind, also has failed. "Prudence," "pragmatism," "sobriety," and "realism" (in the sense of being realistic) should guide the execution of any strategy, but are not themselves strategies.

What else is available? There is always pure isolation-

ism. Perhaps a Finlandized Europe would still trade with America. But would it trade strategic commodities if the Kremlin said no? More to the point, Star Wars, whatever its prospects for technological success, reminds us that eventually nuclear weapons will be overtaken by new technologies. The United States has always maintained a lead in weapons technology, but would this lead endure if the Kremlin were able to use the talents of Europe and Japan to its purposes? And what would be the spirit of political and social life in America with our vision of man's destiny defeated and our adversaries free to foment subversion from our very borders? The case against complete disengagement need not rest on moral grounds alone. If we accept the illusion that we have Fortress America to fall back on for our ultimate safety, the result will be a retreat from the broader commitments safety actually requires.

Tucker proposes the only other strategy in these debates. He would have us return to a policy of containment, but limited to a few selected areas of vital interest—say, Western Europe, Japan, and the Persian Gulf. He challenges the critics of containment: "It will not do to say that we cannot indefinitely play a defensive role. We have now played that role for over a third of a century and, on balance, have played it quite well." He means, I think, that though we have lost ground, we have lost it slowly—a Cuba here, an Indochina there, a Nicaragua there—and it would take generations before the losses would accumulate to perilous proportions. In the meantime, who knows what else might happen that might improve the picture?

FAIR ENOUGH. But the reason we have lost ground so slowly is that we have done our best to resist everywhere. And that is precisely what we are no longer willing to do. Which is why Tucker would have us make the radical shift to defending only a few selected areas. But wouldn't the announcement of such a shift tempt our adversaries to much bolder efforts in all those areas that we defined outside of our containment sphere, just as Acheson's exclusion of South Korea invited aggression in 1950? And how will we insulate the areas within this containment sphere from those without? Tucker includes the Persian Gulf in his list not because of its own value but because its oil makes it critical to the defense of Europe. But can we defend the Persian Gulf while turning a blind eye to the rest of the Middle East and South Asia? Can the security of Japan be separated from that of the rest of East Asia? Can we define Mexico as outside our containment sphere, and if not, can Mexico's fate be severed from that of Central America? Selective containment only exacerbates the problems of containment.

The essential problem of containment is that we don't have the power to forestall Communist advances everywhere. But to pre-emptively abandon most of the world is no solution. The real solution lies in a policy that combines maximum feasible containment (recognizing that in various places the tools available to us are limited) with an "active defense" that seeks to counterbalance future Com-

munist gains with Communist losses. That is the Reagan Doctrine.

If the fallacy of Fortress America shows that we must have a forward defense and the fallacy of selective containment shows it must be an active defense, the question remains: Can it be a defense of mere "power politics," as Kristol suggests? It is true that everywhere that communism has triumphed it has come by force of arms, but in almost every case the way to that triumph has been paved by the manipulation of ideas—to divide, immobilize, and demoralize its opponents. If it is true, as Mao said, that power comes out of the barrel of a gun, it is also true, as Communists seem often to understand better than their adversaries, that guns are useless without people to pull the triggers.

TUCKER AND MOYNIHAN are wrong when they say the ideological battle has been won. The appeal of communism has always rested at least as much on its claim to represent history's appointed destiny as on its claim to provide a just society. Victory by anti-Communist uprisings is an irreplaceable step if communism is ever to be ideologically defeated. They also misconceive the nature of the ideological threat. Communism never won by converting the masses, but by inspiring selfless, disciplined cadres, manipulating masses with tactical slogans, and undermining opponents—by a combination of force and guile, where politics serves as an adjunct to violence. That is the essence of Leninism, and it remains a potent strategy. Communist guerrillas are making serious bids for power in El Salvador and the Philippines. Communist cadres are exercising dominance in broader liberation movements in places such as South Africa.

Kristol supports aid to the *contras*, but objects to framing the struggle in ideological terms. He believes the strategic considerations are all-important. But what is this struggle if not a struggle for democracy? Merely a struggle *against* communism, say, to restore *somocismo*? Who would support such a cause? Prospects for preventing the spread of communism in Central America would be much poorer today if Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador were still (or once again) ruled by military strongmen and ossified oligarchies.

The West knows little about ideological war. But the place to start is with the assertion that democracy is our creed; that we believe all human beings are entitled to its blessings; and that we are prepared to do what we can to help others achieve it. The Reagan Doctrine, which offers military aid to anti-Communist insurgents, is one part of what we need to do. We need also to assist democratic movements throughout the world—and where there are no democratic movements, to assist democratic individuals. Such activities, along with the Reagan Doctrine, can constitute the pillars of a foreign policy strategy that we might call "engagement." Such a strategy may lack a natural domestic constituency, but unlike any available alternative, it can serve our deepest values and protect our long-term security. □

BOOKS AND THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Notes: Japan, Popcorn, France, A Book

How do you say *La Grande Bouffe* in Japanese? The title of Marco Ferreri's 1972 comedy about appetites for food and sex also applies to a new Japanese film, *Tampopo*. If the new film doesn't rise into the upper reaches of gourmet taste in either appetite, it deals heartily with fundamentals. But never heavily. It runs a contrary risk: sometimes it gets

Tampopo
(New Yorker)
La Vie est à nous
(Interama)

so light it almost floats off the screen.

Juzo Itami, who wrote and directed, has almost as much fun with film itself as with his subjects. The opening shot is of a film theater with its first row empty. In come a white-suited gangster and his moll with attendants. The pair sits in the first row, and a table is set before them with food and champagne. Then the hood sees us, steps forward, and says, "Oh, so you're watching a movie, too?" Throughout his picture Itami keeps juggling film references—irising in and out, parodying Westerns and heavy romances. But all these are just side dishes to his main course: noodles.

You don't have to visit Japan—American cities now demonstrate it—to know that the noodle shop is as much a Japanese fixture as the sushi bar. *Tampopo* is about noodles. The title character (the word means dandelion) is a young widow who runs a noodle shop badly. Two truck drivers stop by one day, sample the food, and tell her how bad it is. The older man befriends her and offers to help. At first he is opposed by a local man who is also smitten with *Tampopo*, but eventually both suitors unite to set her on the road to noodle fame and fortune.

Braided with this main story (much too grave a term for this casual affair) are other food episodes that have nothing to do with it. The gangster and his moll have a sex-and-food scene in a lush ho-

tel room that makes the eating scene in *Tom Jones* look like a Sunday school picnic. An old woman sneaks into an empty supermarket at night just to, literally, pinch food. A man rushes home to his family. The wife is ill, but he begs her to cook one last meal for him and the children. She staggers to the stove, cooks, serves, and keels over; and the others gobble up the food as tribute.

Through it all runs the subject of noodles, how best to cook them and consume them. Itami's touch tickles; his invention is capricious and amusing. As a last course, under the closing titles, he gives us a look at where it all starts: a mother nursing her baby.

An enjoyable meal of a picture that, like the noodles, is slurpable.

Speaking of food: a New York chain of film theaters now advertises that it serves real butter on its popcorn. This announcement, at the top of the ad, dwarfs the film titles below. Most of them need dwarfing; still the ad is a reminder of a harsh fact—that the profit from the refreshment stands is what keeps theater owners in business. Probably it's healthfully humbling for a film critic to be reminded that his job is to comment on what people find time to glance at while munching.

Several readers have jogged me because, in the review of *Rosa Luxemburg* (May 18), I omitted to place the film in the line of von Trotta's work—her dominant concern with women, especially women who are critical of society. Mea culpa. Von Trotta declines to call her pictures "women's films," possibly on the same ground that Luxemburg declined to be a feminist: she doesn't want to be compartmentalized; she wants to let the facts of her womanhood and her concern with women speak for themselves in her work. Still it is clear that Luxemburg attracted von Trotta precisely because she is the outstanding German example of a woman who was a social critic. With imperial hindsight, we

can see that the film was inevitable for von Trotta.

Other readers have questioned my comment that von Trotta is arguably the best filmmaker now at work. An opinion can't be "proved," but one can show how it was reached. Many of the great filmmakers of the postwar decades are gone. Those who are left are presumably retired (Bergman, Bresson) or ill (Antonioni, Kurosawa) or artistically diminished (Godard, Fellini). There are numerous blessedly gifted people working today throughout the film world, but, for me, none of them quite reaches the heights achieved by two Germans, von Trotta and Hans-Jürgen Syberberg. The comment about her could "arguably" be applied to him as well. News of a new film from several dozen other directors is exciting; news of a new film from either of those two Germans makes me nervous—the apprehension that bespeaks highest expectation.

A film new to America by one of the departed masters. *La Vie est à nous* by Jean Renoir was just given its American theatrical premiere in Joseph Papp's Film at the Public series. In 1936, at the height of the Popular Front period, the French Communist Party wanted a propaganda film, and Louis Aragon suggested that

FILMS WORTH SEEING

My Life as a Dog. A 12-year-old Swedish boy finding his own way to deal with various buffetings by fate. Funny, perceptive, sad. Excellently made. (Reviewed 5/25/87)

Prick Up Your Ears. The wry, ultimately grim life of the English playwright Joe Orton. Exceptional writing, directing, and acting. Memorable. (4/20/87)

Rosa Luxemburg. Margarethe von Trotta's intelligent, talented investigation of a radical career. Barbara Sukowa strong as Luxemburg. Finally unsatisfactory, still utterly fascinating. (5/18/87)

Swimming to Cambodia. Spalding Gray's one-man show about his role in *The Killing Fields*. Amusing, enlightening, obliquely moving. Sagely directed by Jonathan Demme. (3/23/87)

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Renoir direct it. Renoir agreed, though he did not direct or write all of it. Two of his colleagues were Jean-Paul Le Chanois and Henri Cartier-Bresson. Subsequently Renoir said that he was not a Communist, which the viewer finds a bit difficult to believe—almost wants not to believe. In those days, with fascism swelling, with French democracy short-sighted and idle, the film's message could have provided at least a transient hope.

La Vie est à nous is a succession of sketches, documentary sequences, and newsreel clips carefully arranged. Some of the fiction sketches are tonally much like Nazi films of the period—disheartened people being inspirited by a new faith—with the nouns changed. Other scenes include: a millionaire losing a fortune in a gambling casino and next day leveling pay cuts on the workers in his factory; Hitler orating while on the sound track we hear only a dog barking; French fascists beating up a vendor of *L'Humanité*, then themselves being beaten by outraged people; a finale in which masses flow over the countryside singing the "Internationale."

Some viewers insist that the film has true Renoir touches. They escaped me. What didn't escape me, other than the blatant propaganda and the poor pho-

tography, was the retrospective pathos. I couldn't help thinking of, for instance, the Moscow trials, which were going on at just about the time that the picture was made. I couldn't help wondering how many of the people I was looking at ended up in slave-labor camps and ovens.

"The film isn't mine, but I worked on it," said Renoir of *La Vie est à nous* in an interview with Charles Thomas Samuels in 1972. That interview, a long one, is in Samuels's book *Encountering Directors*, which was first published later the same year. The book contains ten other long interviews—with Truffaut, Bresson, Reed, Olmi, Clair, Hitchcock, Antonioni, Fellini, De Sica, and Bergman—all of them conducted by a young and exceptional critic thoroughly acquainted with the work of these men. Samuels died two years later, and his book never had the attention it deserves. Now it has been reprinted by Da Capo Press (paperbound, \$14.95) with all the many photographs. To quote from the introduction I wrote for this new edition: "Imagine a book of interviews by a young Edmund Wilson with 11 important early 20th-century writers. If such a book existed, *Encountering Directors* would deserve comparison with it."

EDWARD ROTHSTEIN ON MUSIC

New World Symphonietta

If we are ever to understand the course of American music there are three things we must know about Antonín Dvořák's visit here during the 1890s. (1) He was brought to New York to direct a new conservatory—founded by the wife of a wholesale grocer. (2) Two of the most important black musicians of the following decades were his pupils. (3) During a night out at New York's watering holes, Dvořák drank the influential critic James Huneker under the table. (We might include with the third item Dvořák's passion for pigeons—he visited Central Park to observe them at least once a week—and his love of locomotives—he would hang out at 155th Street just to watch the Boston trains come in.)

What do trains, whiskey, grocery stores, and Negro musicians have to do

with the course of American music? Well, Old Borax, as he was called by the natives who couldn't quite get that "zha" sound in his name, arrived here at a most propitious moment, bearing propitious gifts. (1) This was a time of nouveau money in the arts. Dvořák's patron had no investment in the weightiness of the European heritage; her passions were for what could be made of the land whose fortune she shared. (2) There seemed to be no "given" American musical culture, but Dvořák—himself an explorer of his native Czech folk musics—found that culture in the music of the Negroes and Indians; he argued passionately for its inclusion in concert hall music. (3) Dvořák was eminently suited to his time and place—an earthy, ordinary man who happened to be a composer.

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I confess that I would not be as convinced about Dvořák's centrality had I not just read Josef Skvorecký's *Dvořák in Love* (Knopf). This historical novel about the composer, written by a fellow Czech who immigrated to these shores on a more permanent basis and for more profound reasons than did his subject, is robust, exuberant, affectionate—like Dvořák's attitude toward the "New World." In fact, it may be the best novel about a composer since the book that is its precise opposite in spirit and tone and subject, Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*. For here, instead of Adrian Leverkühn's high modernist piety, there is Dvořák's devout innocence; in place of Germanic brooding, there is folkish glee; instead of syphilitic sickness, there are episodes of bittersweet romance; in place of European Sturm und Drang, there is this book's subtitle: *A Light-hearted Dream*. And if the decline of European civilization inspired Mann's dour brilliance, here the inspiration is the explosive rise of a peculiarly American culture.

But the comparison is unfair to Skvorecký. He doesn't mean to be solemn or even profound. He never lets us see the world through Dvořák's eyes or lets Dvořák become too real. He doesn't care; he is too much in love, dizzyingly so, as is everybody in this book. "Intoxication" is everywhere. Dvořák loved drink. So did his compatriots in Spillville, Iowa, a small town of Czech immigrants where the composer and his family spent a remarkable summer during their sojourn here; the conjunction of drink and well-told tales provides some of the book's most wondrous concoctions. Every chapter, in fact, is a story, recalled or imagined by one of the players in this drama, drawn from various periods of the composer's life, relating to the American visit. It is a chorus of voices: they include the critic Huneker, who disliked much of Dvořák's music; one of Dvořák's black students, Harry T. Burleigh, who later brought the spiritual into the concert hall; Dvořák's wife's sister Josephine, who, in the author's compelling interpretation, was the love of Dvořák's life; and a rather robust tuba player in a New York saloon, who convinced Dvořák to put a part for his instrument into the "New World" Symphony.

DESPITE THE occasional haze of overly crafted variety (and some preciousness), even the extravagant inventions of this book have a hold on the imagination. But it would be hard—even

in the interest of tall tales—to improve on the facts of American concert musical life during the 19th century. In 1817, for example, Antony Philip Heinrich, also a Czech-born composer, led the first American performance of a Beethoven symphony—in Lexington, Kentucky; he later had an audience with President Tyler, and journeyed hundreds of miles through rugged country in quest of native music. He wrote epic, grand pieces, now thankfully lost to time, with titles like "Pushmataha, a Venerable Chief of a Western Tribe of Indians," "The Treaty of William Penn with the Indians: Concerto Grosso," and the resounding "Rhapsodia Majestica ad Maiorem Gloriam Rei Publicae Americanae Transatlanticae."

And there was the French-born maestro Jullien, who came to New York in the 1850s with his orchestra to present "Monster Concerts for the Masses" and conducted 1,500 performers under the auspices of P. T. Barnum; his jewel-studded baton was usually brought to him on a silken cushion. A successor in monster concerts was one Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore, who may not have had Heinrich's dedication to accounts of Indian treaties and tribes, or Jullien's bejeweled baton, but he did intend to bring to these shores Europe's biggest and brightest. After the Civil War, Gilmore planned the "Grandest Musical Demonstration that the world has ever witnessed." A new coliseum was constructed in Boston, and in 1869, 10,000 choral voices joined an orchestra of 590 to present for the delectation of 20,000 listeners two movements of Schubert's Symphony in C, "The Star Spangled Banner," and the "Anvil Chorus"—the last two by request of President Grant, who was in attendance. This was no mere show, of passing import. The report in the *New York Sun* read:

Heretofore America has had no standing in the musical art world. England has looked down on us. Germany has supposed that no festival could be given here except by her Sangerbunds. Italy and France have recognized for us no higher possibilities than the production of their operas. At one step, without any preliminaries, without more special preparation than could be crowded into a few weeks, we have lifted ourselves, so far as great musical gatherings are concerned, to an artistic level with these nations. . . . The enterprise has been conceived and executed on a scale in keeping with the vastness of the country, with the breadth and largeness of the American methods, and with the expedition and fearlessness that characterize all our attempts in untried fields of efforts.

"Only in America!" Skvorecký's Dvořák says in wonder, hearing of these men and their dreams—immigrants and operators whose taste for enterprise and breadth and expedition and fearlessness matched their Bunyanesque personalities. The quest for a native American music inspired all the devotion of the quest for the lost grail or an unsullied natural state; but it was spiced with a certain anxiety about measuring up to the highest standards of artistic achievement while still obtaining the highest possible return on investment. Showmanship mixed with kitsch and warm-hearted good faith.

IT IS another of the paradoxes of our culturally democratic past that these extravagant and ludicrous enterprises had serious ramifications. Jullien's imported orchestra brought to America players and virtuosos who later had an important impact on native musical education and performance. The grandeur that was Gilmore's helped inspire interest in the endowment of new Philharmonic orchestras across the country. As for Heinrich, his quest for a native American music among the Indians was echoed more than a half century later when, in 1892, Dvořák came.

He was lured by a \$15,000 salary offered by Jeannete M. Thurber, herself an extraordinary American musical figure who used great sums from her husband's wholesale grocery business to found the American National Opera—a company that lasted just long enough to lose a small fortune—and the National Conservatory of Music, whose directorship Dvořák accepted. The conservatory was created to help establish a national musical culture; Dvořák was to play a crucial role. He was thus Heinrich's well-schooled heir, turning the grand-scaled public extravaganzas of Jullien and Gilmore inward, in the service of art. Would that Mrs. Thurber's husband had not suffered in the crash of '93—Dvořák might have stayed, the conservatory might have flourished, and the course of American music might have been different.

But Dvořák's entrance into phantasmagoric American musical life was still quite profound, for Dvořák himself represented a music not of false epic grandeur but of folk intimacy—the sort of music that made Smetana, Tchaikovsky, and Sibelius national heroes back home. Dvořák had already attempted to combine the symphonic culture of Western

Europe with the folk songs and musical culture of Middle Europe. He once offered a toast in Russian to Tchaikovsky, praising him for the glory he had brought to the Slavic people. Dvořák himself received similar toasts here for what he had done for the New World.

For what he saw when he arrived was that the national musical culture did not need to be invented; it needed to be discovered. In 1893 he wrote in the *Chicago Tribune*: "Every nation has its music. There is Italian, German, French, Bohemian, Russian; why not American music?" He reminded the *New York Herald* of the source of this music: "All of the great musicians borrowed from the songs of the common people." And he revealed what he had found: "The country is full of melody, original, sympathetic, and varying in mood, color, and character. . . . America can have great and noble music of her own, growing out of the very soil and partaking of its nature—the natural voice of a free and vigorous race." In fact: "I am now satisfied that the future music of this country must be founded upon what are called the Negro melodies. . . . These are the folk songs of America and your composers must turn to them."

These were principles with which Mrs. Thurber agreed. Dvořák found evidence of these American musics among the students at the conservatory—including Harry T. Burleigh and Will Marion Cook, a black violin prodigy who studied with Joachim in Europe before he turned to musical comedy, producing the first Negro musical-comedy Broadway production, "Clorindy, or The Origin of the Cakewalk" (he also appears in Skvorecký's novel). Dvořák found Indian songs and Negro spirituals in New York and on his trip to Spillville, which helped inspire his "New World" Symphony, his "American" String Quartet, and even an arrangement of "Old Folks at Home." Skvorecký's characters also remark on another lineage of American music that Dvořák may have fathered: Rubin Goldmark, one of his students at the conservatory, later went on to teach George Gershwin, that quintessential "American" figure for later generations.

This influence didn't come, ironically, from the particulars of Dvořák's "New World" music, but from his ideas and temperament. Only the great Largo melody of that clearly named symphony seemed to have a concrete heritage: it was so authentic in its Negro inspiration

that it fathered a spiritual, "Coming Home." (There have even been arguments about which came first.) But Dvořák's music served as an icon for his followers, a sign of what was possible when a composer attempted to sound deeply a people's spirit. Similar musical solutions were worked out generations later in the great American symphonic music of the 1930s and '40s.

The currents of musical traditions, of art musics and folk musics, run together, with Dvořák at a sort of vortex. But the result is a mixture of styles and attitudes that have yet to be sorted out. During the 1920s American composers (like Copland and Gershwin) actually reversed Dvořák's path, traveling to the Old World, to Paris, in order to become more truly American. And whether talking about jazz and swing, the WPA, Leonard Bernstein, rock, or minimalism, the quest for an American music in its various incarnations continues. It is a quest that, in controversy and contradiction, is the inspiration behind *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*—one of the most ambitious and conflicted attempts to document American musical culture.

Given all this, Skvorecký's novel, de-

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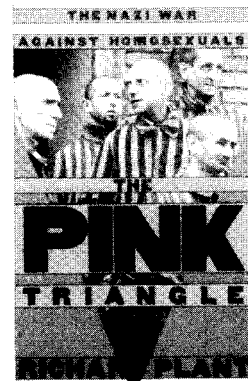
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spite its sometimes gnostic wanderings, is a stunning achievement. For it turns the quest into a matter of temperament and spirit rather than issue and achievement. The book—to step away for a moment from the musical musings it has instigated—is a romance, in which the characters perform dances of love and desire; Dvořák's love for his sister-in-law, his daughter's love for the composer's American amanuensis, the book's various movements of seductions and flirtations—all create a spirit of unrequited yearning found by the author in America itself (and in Dvořák's music). Skvorecký is himself a jazz musician and, as his earlier novels have shown, he is quite ingenious at finding high seriousness in low comedy, and vice versa.

The gentle and affectionate imagination at work makes the composer seem at once vital and imaginary, a creature of body and of spirit. As in his music, nothing profound is demanded, much that is sweet is offered, and something rich and pleasing is received. That must have been the way Dvořák was welcomed here; it is the way he is still heard. The author comes down heavily on Dvořák's side, sharing his vision of an American music growing from popular and folk roots. This is too simple—as Skvorecký's robustly brilliant novel *The Engineer of Human Souls* showed, he would hardly take the same view of literature—but no matter. "Deo gratias!" proclaims an epigraph at the close of this novel. For all the qualifications, yes indeed.

with the modern world, though the text of its proceedings breathes an optimism now quaintly anachronistic. In its mass of documents issues were grasped with unnerving directness. Pope John XXIII's opening address to the Council was the first papal document addressed not merely to the faithful, but to "all men of good will." He reached out even to the Communist world, by drawing a distinction between the systems of belief that it represented and the men and structures that enforced these beliefs. "Besides," he continued, "who can deny that those movements, insofar as they conform to the dictates of right reason and are interpreters of the lawful aspirations of the human person, contain elements that are positive and deserving of approval?"

More significant, though less noticed, was the peace that the address made with liberalism. As Reinhold Niebuhr pointed out at the time, it rather easily laid to rest the long-standing confrontation between natural rights and natural law, by conflating the two. John XXIII both asserted the necessity for "freedom" and attempted to make it compatible with the moral strictures with which natural law constrained us. Catholics had a natural right to freedom, but they were not entitled to use that right for any ends they chose. Catholics were not "free" to accumulate wealth without limit, nor to exploit, nor to commit adultery, nor indeed to commit any sin. Yet the admonishing rhetoric deliberately suggested that they were still "free" in a modern and politically charged sense of that word. It was, it is, an explosive mix.

These overtures made sense within the historicism of the documents, especially *Pacem in Terris*. It talked of a "new order" in which "the conviction that all men are equal by reason of their natural dignity has been generally accepted." This was an order as inevitable as it was largely unsubstantiated in the text. It presented an opportunity for the Church to assist in the creation of a universal common good by which nations could address one another. A notion of progress had entered the spirit of the Church, bound up with particular political structures and ideas. And yet at the same time the Church was to maintain an independence from them. In subsequent years that independence proved rather paradoxical.

That paradox is the major conclusion to be drawn from Eric Hanson's dense and detailed, broad but shallow book. The complexity of the Church's engagement with modernity, as well as its ex-

CROSS PURPOSES

The Catholic Church in World Politics

by Eric O. Hanson

(Princeton University Press, 485 pp., \$24.95)

Tranquillitas Ordinis: The Present Failure and Future Promise of American Catholic Thought on War and Peace

by George Weigel Jr.

(Oxford University Press, 416 pp., \$27.50)

We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition

by John Courtney Murray, S. J.

(Sheed and Ward, 336 pp., \$11.50 paper)

There was a moment on the pope's recent visit to Chile that still lingers in the mind. Tear gas was fired into the crowd in Santiago. Rioting broke out within a stone's throw of the altar. And John Paul II knelt to pray. Faces were turned toward him, looked up to him to take sides; and instead he proceeded to pray. The act was moving, but more important it was ambiguous. The pope's presence alone was to measure the extent of his commitment.

Political explanations for the pope's behavior—the advice of local bishops, his personal experience in Poland, the dangers of encouraging violence—have been offered, but they fail to capture the drama of what was really happening in Santiago. It would be better to ask why

the pope was there at all. The answer is simple: the Second Vatican Council. That event, decades distant, contains the clue to the pope's predicament. After over 20 years, the Council's most enduring effect has been to have removed the possibility of a complete separation between the Church and the modern world (a separation represented perhaps most clearly by the late 19th-century papacy). For the Vatican, a political engagement with the world, a compromising commitment, is in full swing. It was such an engagement that was articulated in Santiago, where the ironies implicit in living the apostolic life in the modern world were bluntly revealed.

The Second Vatican Council was aware of the risks of opening a dialogue

tremely unpredictable future, is exhaustively described. The impact of the National Bishops' Conferences, set up by the Council to foster greater autonomy and unity within the national churches, is a case in point. These conferences could lead to the most radical dispersal of Church authority in its history, yet their legitimacy was never articulated in Canon Law (a key example of the vagueness of the Council's proposals) and their impact is obscured by the interventionism of the present pope. Similarly, the effects of radical theology, another result of Vatican II's *glasnost*, are also largely still in doubt. Its capacity to derail (the cases of the United States, the Netherlands, and Nicaragua come to mind) is matched by unnewsworthy but equally significant attempts to incorporate its insights into traditional theology, as in Brazil, El Salvador, or, oddly enough, Britain.

THE CONFUSION does not simply stem from the subject matter. Hanson's book has its own confusions, which are owed partly to his historical superficiality ("secular political and intellectual trends from the 16th to the 19th century affected different states in different ways") and partly to his failure to make a satisfactory synthesis of his geographically organized material. The new "expressive" role of the papacy is constantly alluded to, without any analysis of what this might mean. The Church's Middle East policy is left unexamined: Hanson merely reiterates concern for the internationalization of Jerusalem and the protection of the Maronite Christians, without pointing to the paradox of the Vatican's formal recognition of Lebanon and its ambiguous attitude toward Israel. Nor do we get an analysis of why John Paul II's genuine concern for improving relations with Judaism have not led to a more ambitious diplomacy. More important, the conservative rearguard action of Cardinal Ratzinger in Rome (who was influential, for example, in the recent pronouncements on birth technology) is not given the space or the respect it deserves (although Hanson's treatment of the rival claims of the Jesuits and Opus Dei is valuable). Ratzinger's arguments for the defense of orthodoxy are powerful, and they are allied to a strong faction within the Church that views the Second Vatican Council more in sorrow than in anger; they should not be scanted.

But the questions raised by Hanson are

riveting. The demise of European Christian democracy, for example, with its close connections between middle-class Catholicism and center-right political parties, is central to the future of Catholicism in Western Europe. Originating in the Catholic social movements and center parties of the early part of this century, and revived by the prospects of a united Europe during the postwar period, the Christian Democratic parties of Germany and Italy, together with the Catholic right in France, represented a tradition of considerable force in the emergence of a political grouping allied with democracy and closely linked with the Church in Europe. But the Americanization of the European right is fast eating away at this alliance. The view of religious faith as merely instrumental in blessing a market economy now covers a multitude of sinners, from the Italian Christian Democrats, via Chirac, Thatcher, and Gonzales, to parts of the Spanish opposition, eager to bury the Civil War past. (The concomitant middle-class support for Catholic private education in both Spain and France shows, however, the limits of secularization.)

THIS DEVELOPMENT has an equally ironic and equally fateful counterpart: the prominence of Christianity as a strong, constitutive social bond in Central Europe. The Red Army may have made a division of Europe that now has a will—or rather a soul—of its own. Hanson ably brings out the variations in Central European Christianity. In Hungary, the Church has been able to develop a strong and beneficial relationship with the Communist state, including recent state permission to expand its religious education of the young. In Czechoslovakia, recent state attempts to co-opt the Church by a "peace" organization (ironically called *Pacem in Terris*) have led to Vatican intervention in the Czechoslovakian Church. But Hanson pays less attention to the strength of religious faith (rather than institutions) in the Eastern bloc, the power of Polish belief, and the remaining piety to the Virgin Mary, evidenced by the millions of pilgrims visiting Medjugorje in Yugoslavia. Our Lady appeared to six children there in 1981. The comment of a Yugoslavian official about the phenomenon perfectly illustrates the gulf now widening between the two Europes: "We have no illusions. Religion is here and will be here for a long time." Could anyone say that with confidence in the West?

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Hanson argues that in the developing world the Church provides a mechanism, whether of the center-right or the center-left, for moderating self-government. But again he begs for a conclusion. If the role of the Church in Haiti, in the Philippines, and in El Salvador is as Hanson describes it, then religion may have far more explanatory power in these countries' recently improved prospects for democracy than any shift in American foreign policy. Moreover, if it is true that the durability and the success of the Church in those crisis-ridden countries has been owed to the unity of the national churches and their avoidance of radical divisions, then it must be acknowledged that the flexibility of response outlined by the Second Vatican Council has been a real force for good, in preserving the Church and agitating for democracy. Here the key success is Brazil, and the key failures are Nicaragua and Chile, where the activities of Christians for Socialism and the Cardenal brothers provoked conservative reactions and splits in both churches. The result was strengthened dictatorships of the fascist right and the totalitarian left.

THE COMPLEXITY of the entire picture, this vital but bewildering mix of theological experiments and historical events, may be seen, too, in the agonizings of the American Church over the question of war and peace. George Weigel's book is an impressive attempt to weave a coherent way out of the confusion. *Tranquillitas Ordinis* (the peace of a dynamic, rightly ordered political community) is the proposed mechanism for reconciling the plethora of competing religious and political understandings. Developing a view of human nature, drawn a little confusingly from both Augustine and Aquinas, that sees man as essentially perfectible through the workings of grace rather than as permanently condemned by original sin, Weigel attacks the false choice of either realism or moralism in foreign policy. Realism implies an Augustinian pessimism; moralism, a simplistic escape from worldly responsibility. In language that echoes much contemporary criticism of liberalism, he talks of the "burden of creating and sustaining [international] political community ordered to the common good," confident that "we are, in the end, the image of God in history, and the task of history is one we cannot lay down." Weigel, in short, is an international communitarian.

This Thomist project requires a *phronesis*—or practical wisdom—of peace. Weigel finds just what he is looking for in the work of John Courtney Murray, to whom the book is partly dedicated. Murray's attempts to assimilate the American experiment with Catholic thought are echoed and endorsed through all of these pages (and in the recent writings of other neoconservative Catholic thinkers as well). Murray is cited almost as an authority. The chapter outlining his contribution is described simply as "the tradition received." Reverent acceptance, rather than critical engagement, is the tone of Weigel's book.

IT WAS Murray's tone, too. In his most influential book, *We Hold These Truths*, Murray persuasively outlines an interpretation of natural law theory that does some justice to Aquinas's project. But he adds two central propositions: the historical development of human nature, which Aquinas merely alludes to, and the centrality of the American experiment in the triumph and endurance of natural law theory, which Aquinas might be forgiven for not anticipating.

Murray, alas, prefers to assert than to argue. He admits the paradox in the view that human nature, according to natural law, is both unchanging and yet redeemable through the possibility of sustained virtue in the political community. In traditional theology the paradox calls for grace, but Murray adds a strikingly Hegelian element to this understanding. Grace for him is revealed through history: "He who entered the stream of history as its Redeemer is the Logos, Eternal Reason. Through His Spirit He is still immanent in history, there to do a work of reason which is justice . . ." He adds historicism, in other words. And his historicism is designed, rather worryingly, to justify a certain historical event: America. The rational state, the immanent expression of the Spirit in history, is the United States:

The sheer constancy of the assertion of [human] values [in America] gives challenging point to the claim that they are authentically human. And a certain greatness that invests the achievement which America has spread across the pages of history is proof that the values upon which the achievement drew for inspiration are exalted.

The argument has an appealing circularity. What is more troubling is the pride of place given to history in this theology. History appears to legitimate itself. The moral ambiguity of the individual soul

confronted with historical change becomes in Murray a comfortable certainty about the endurance of American values.

This fits in nicely with the thrust of Murray's work. Murray is not keen to point out paradox or ambiguity. He is eager to calm any fears among Catholics that they might have to face up to a choice between God and country. To this end, America is baptized in the name of natural law. The conflict between natural rights and natural law in the American proposition, between the pursuit of happiness and the salvation of the soul, between material wealth and internal holiness—all these are asserted away. Murray's writing resonates with the spirit of Vatican II: not exactly a coincidence, since Murray was one of its prime architects. He largely wrote the "Declaration on Religious Freedom" made by Paul VI in December 1965. In his own footnotes to his own document, Murray remarks of the pope's newfound faith in liberal rights: "Happily, the Declaration adopts the classical phrase which the Founding Fathers likewise adopted when framing the First Amendment in 1791." In the circularity of Murray's reasoning, it is difficult to know who exactly is justifying whom.

BUT MURRAY has an argument for the Americanization of Catholic thought. He sees the fundamental propositions of America as honoring the two pillars of Catholic social teaching: sovereignty under God and the necessity for consent. These, for Murray, are the heart of the American experiment. He simply ignores the atheist possibilities of natural rights and the radicalness of the separation of church and state. The religious neutrality of the public space that is today the most vigorous part of the American tradition is hardly addressed. Nor is there any understanding of how the low claims of self-preservation at the heart of liberal constitutionalism might conflict with the high spiritual claims of a Thomist political community. Nor is there anything more than an announcement of the continuities between natural law's conceptions of consent and the liberal constitutionalism of the American Revolution. Indeed, Murray contends that America was merely a conservation of Thomist principles, and no genuine revolution at all.

This makes for some rather acute ironies. At one point he defines America with characteristic imprecision: "Free government"—perhaps this sums up the

consensus. 'A free people under a limited government' puts the matter more exactly. It is a phrase that would have satisfied the first Whig, St. Thomas Aquinas." The irony of Aquinas supporting a political party founded several centuries after his death, in a country in which the mere admission of the Catholic faith was treasonable, does not seem to have occurred to Murray. But for him even Locke was a closet Catholic. Locke may not have realized it, but he, too, was a Thomist: "Though Locke knew only an artificial law of nature, he asserted in effect the fundamental positions of the natural law philosophy of the state that had been the creation of greater minds than his . . ." Never mind that Catholics, even before atheists, were the only sect not to be tolerated in his *Letter Concerning Toleration*.

The point of Murray's tendentiousness is not hard to find. He wishes, as a Catholic theologian, to reclaim the "truths" of the American founders. And he wishes to interpret them in his way not only for the sake of Catholicism, but for the sake of America:

If the American people can no longer base this sense [of natural rights] on naive assumptions of self-evidence, it is imperative that they find other more reasoned grounds for their essential affirmation that they are uniquely a people, a free society. Otherwise the peril is great. The complete loss of one's identity is, with all propriety of theological definition, hell. In diminished forms, it is insanity. And it would not be well for the American giant to go lumbering about the world today, lost and mad.

Faith, in Murray's view, becomes a badly needed instrument of national "identity." Because America is now history and history is the story of the self-evidence of natural law, America becomes the embodiment of natural law. Of course faith begins to be twisted to fit its new role; it must provide, in Murray's account, a rationale even for foreign policy.

WEIGEL IS a good student of Murray's. He refers chillingly to America as a *novus ordo seclorum* (the Latin is Virgil, not the Vulgate). Elsewhere he is more direct: "There is no contradiction between commitments to the truth claims of Catholicism and commitment to the American democratic experiment." And elsewhere, rather vulgarly: "It is time, in American Catholicism, to love America again . . ." Like Murray's conflation of the contradictions and par-

adoxes of the American experiment with Catholic teachings, Weigel's is simplistic and largely unsubstantiated. In both cases it gets in the way of a legitimate Catholic project: the enunciation of a reasoned and philosophical approach to war and peace that can shed real light on contemporary arguments about international relations.

Natural law does provide, as Weigel shows, an essentially Catholic contribution to that debate. His argument that it has been culpably neglected by a Catholic hierarchy more concerned with neo-Marxist understandings of "structural sin," or with neo-Pelagian understandings of the possibility of a world without nuclear weapons, is powerful and convincing. He reminds us of how facile much of the debate about war and peace has been, of how simple references to uninterpreted scripture have been the norm, of how easy it has been to let questions of secular policy usurp the commitment to a comprehensive and sustained vision of the Catholic understanding of peace. He is particularly acute in his analysis of how the Catholic conception of peace as a political con-

struction was ceded in Vietnam to arguments that were part of, rather than a curative for, the public trauma. (Arguments for conscientious objection were based simply on clemency rather than on the richer Catholic arguments about a variety of ways of serving the political community.) And he correctly remarks upon the tactics of extremists, noticeably Pax Christi, in manipulating the necessity for Church unity by forcing the Bishops' Conference to move left or face open division.

But these welcome polemics reflect neither the thrust nor the tone of the book, which is an effort at reconciliation with both the right and the left. (The right will doubtless feel more comfortable with where the center ends up.) Weigel's horror of being called naive leads him to argue for international regimes that work through, rather than above, nation-states. His concern to avoid the charge that he is oblivious to the threat of totalitarianism leads him to assert strongly the necessity for a human rights agenda to underpin any such international arrangements. And his wish to soften the left leads him to argue for

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mild measures of redistribution in those countries where such policies might advance the cause of pluralist democracy. But such moderation is a dodge. It fails to confront the really hard questions. It is a fact, for example, that many in the Church find Marx and Heidegger more appealing as spiritual guides than Aquinas. Defeating them will require more than the affirmation of an "orthodoxy" that no longer exists. There are no arguments for the priority in Catholic doctrine of nature over history in Weigel's book; there are merely Murray-like assertions about nature, embarrassingly muddled, awkwardly combined with historicism. But it is argument, not assertion, that is needed for the discussion inaugurated by the Vatican Council. That discussion can no longer be wished away.

And that discussion will go nowhere fast unless it acknowledges the contradictory nature of Catholicism in the modern world. This Weigel, the happy synthesizer, does not do. By declaring natural law to be compatible with America, by making the solution so comprehensive and so simple, by articulating a theory that will banish all the complexities, Weigel misses something essential in the fate of the modern Church: its uncertainty. History has not provided the Church with a comfortably Hegelian purpose by which everything has been, or will be, resolved. It has instead presented faith with a moral challenge, with a choice that includes both good

and evil. Far from showing the inevitable triumph of natural law, modernity has seen the destruction of even the concepts that make natural law thinkable again. Weigel's confidence misses the depth of this crisis, and its consequence for Christianity. Modernity leaves Christians with a challenge to gamble. We do not know whether alliance or attack is the safest option. But we do know that escape, or a cozy coincidence of philosophical and political opposites, is no longer possible.

Weigel's book represents just such an escape from the dilemma that Hanson's book describes. The escape is certainly coherent; but its coherence is its flaw, since it transforms the risk of faith into a safe bet. In so doing, it obscures the essence of the Christian calling: to act in radical doubt, in the knowledge that any action, even the best intended, can be a manifestation of evil. This is the risk for the Catholic Church in world politics. It is this uncertainty that explains the anguished expression on John Paul's face as he knelt to pray in Santiago. And it goes some way, at least, toward explaining the contemporary challenge, even in America, of the cross to which he turned.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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that the exceptional degree of attention that Toscanini received in the press gave the public a mistaken notion of a performer's proper place in the musical hierarchy. In Horowitz's account, Toscanini and the American music industry enjoyed a mutually profitable relationship at the expense of Music. Their alliance, he believes, paved the way for such current phenomena as television's "Great Performances" series (or music for the eye) and Luciano Pavarotti's chats with Johnny Carson.

Horowitz's disorganized, ponderous, and repetitive study would be eminently ignorable if it weren't dressed up as something other than the book of opinion that it is. Instead, Horowitz purveys it as a work of scholarship, at least in part. Its conclusions are extremely questionable. Horowitz presents them in the first pages of the book: he calls Toscanini the "high priest of the music appreciation movement of the '30s and '40s," and condemns "the Toscanini movement's infectious cultural populism," as if the conductor and his admirers—knowledgeable and ignorant, rational and fanatical, celebrated and anonymous—had banded together for seditious purposes. "No book-of-the-month club had a salesman to rival Toscanini," declares Horowitz.

Dwight Macdonald proposed that mass culture and high culture were merging into a flavorless "midcult" that waters down and vulgarizes the standards of high culture it pretends to respect. Horowitz refers to Macdonald when he writes that "propagated by RCA and NBC, by *Time* and the *New York Times*, Toscanini's cult was the definitive midcult phenomenon for music in this century." Never mind Stokowski and *Fantasia*, Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops, the apotheosis of Leonard Bernstein, the Karajan-Deutsche Grammophon-Unitel triumvirate, and whatever horrors await us in the 1990s: Toscanini's "cult" was "definitive." And later, in the possibly midcultish and certainly offensive style in which much of the book is written, Horowitz returns to this theme: "Toscanini's redundant Beethoven and Weber, Dvořák and Elgar, were as instantly and effortlessly preoccupying as a drawn six-shooter at the movies or a three-and-two count, bases loaded, at the ballpark."

For Horowitz, in short, whatever Toscanini did, or did not do, was wrong and harmful. He never granted interviews or made a public spectacle of himself—but this only contributed to

THE MAESTRO MALIGNED

Understanding Toscanini:
How He Became an American Culture-God
and Helped Create a New Audience for Old Music
by Joseph Horowitz

(Knopf, 492 pp., \$30)

Most of Arturo Toscanini's long life (1867-1957) was spent in Italy. It was there, especially at La Scala, that he fought, and generally won, his great battles to update and internationalize the operatic and symphonic repertoires, and to improve performance standards in the theater and concert hall. The conductor's principal North American engagements were with the Metropolitan Opera (1908-15), the New York Philharmonic

(1926-36), and the NBC Symphony Orchestra (1937-54). His popularity in the United States was at its greatest during the Philharmonic and NBC periods, and he made most of his recordings at NBC.

Joseph Horowitz has listened to some of those recordings, and he dislikes most of what he has heard. He is convinced, too, that Toscanini's conservative repertoire during those years was a baleful influence on American musical life, and

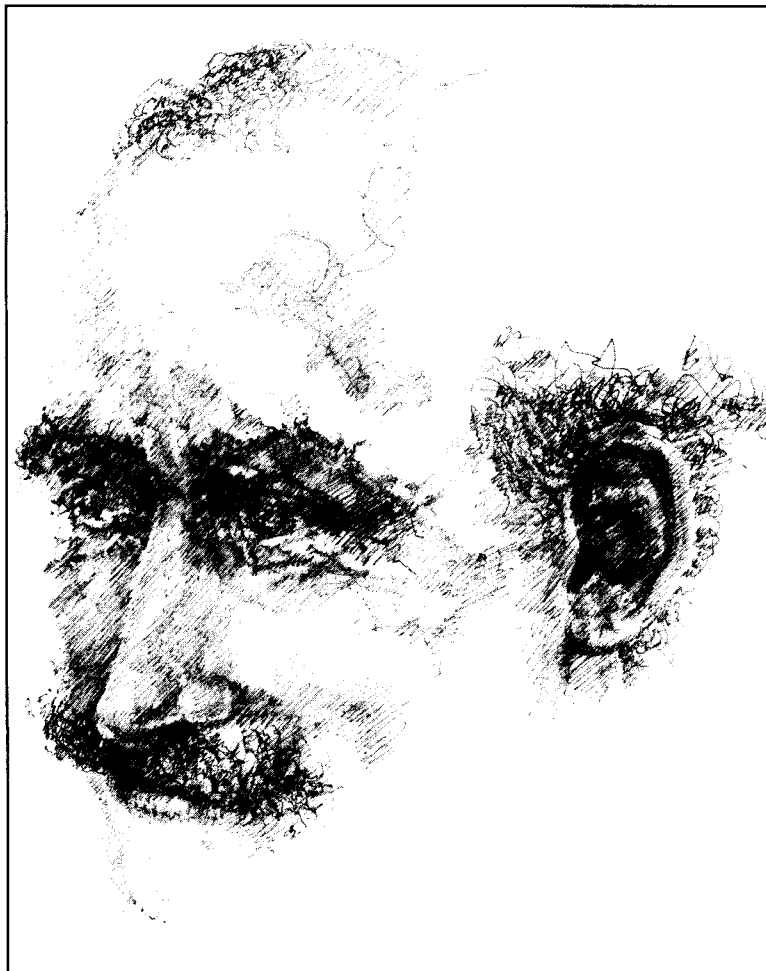
the mystique that surrounded him. He was able to raise the technical standards of orchestras and operatic ensembles—but this was because he considered technique more important than substance. Toscanini's controlled yet intense way of conducting, as well as his magnetic personality, usually elicited excellence and devotion from singers and players—an extramusical and therefore, by implication, reprehensible cause of his fame. He had spent 40 years, in Italy and elsewhere, struggling to disseminate the works of Wagner, Brahms, Musorgsky, Tchaikovsky, Dvořák, Puccini, Debussy, Richard Strauss, Sibelius, and numerous minor composers, before he decided to dedicate his last years to getting closer to the symphonic masters he loved best—but this concession to personal taste is described as a betrayal of artistic responsibilities. Even the expressiveness of his face is made to seem an unfair weapon used by Toscanini against Art.

According to Horowitz, Toscanini was nothing more than an "inspired technocrat," a "manager with a vision, and a genius for making the team sweat to achieve it." But the hundreds of hours of recorded Toscanini rehearsals unanimously testify to his overwhelming, even monomaniacal, concern with musical expression. When he had to deal (as all conductors do) with wrong notes, bowings that didn't "sound," and wind balances that needed adjusting, he generally did so in exasperation, because he was being held back from his real work.

But Horowitz takes us bizarrely to the days of P. T. Barnum's sponsorship of Jenny Lind, and to the pages of Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad*, to show that 19th-century Americans—whose major concerns were, he says, efficiency and progress—mistrusted European culture while standing guiltily in awe of it. Assimilating sophisticated culture, like reading the Bible, was considered good

for the soul, but boring. Barnum realized that by offering musical performances of great virtuosity, by persuading people that virtuosity and culture are synonymous, by publicizing his artists' spirituality and humanity, he could combine moral uplift with entertainment, for his own immense profit. Reasonable, so far . . . but Horowitz traces a long, crooked, impassable path from Barnum to Toscanini.

The conductor's prodigious memory,



DRAWING BY DAVID SCHORR FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

his insistence on correct playing, and his credo of faithfulness to composers' intentions especially appealed to Americans, says Horowitz, because Americans, more than Europeans, admire prowess, know-how, and uncomplicated moral behavior. Similarly, Toscanini's humble origins and his courageous stand against fascism are said to appeal to Americans, because Americans believe in the self-made man and have a strong, if naive, sense of justice. Toscanini was exotic and irascible enough to satisfy preconceived notions about artistic temperament, but simple and humble enough to

qualify as a real person. This mattered because, says Horowitz, "more than Europeans, Americans abhor elitism and apply democratic values with broad strokes."

To support these simplistic ideas about Toscanini's American popularity, Horowitz quotes at sleep-inducing length from the writings of the conductor's most gushing American admirers of the period, notably the newspaper critics Lawrence Gilman and Olin Downes,

whose fulsome praise was indeed revolting. But is there any reason to believe that intelligent musicians and members of the public in those days paid more attention to Gilman, Downes, and Company than today's acute listeners pay to our own shrillest critics? And why does Horowitz think that praise for Toscanini was more vociferous and less rational in the United States than elsewhere? "La Scala's performances moved and shook the public and sent it into ecstasy," wrote the *Frankfurter Zeitung's* critic Karl Holl about Toscanini's Berlin appearances in 1929, when the city's opera conductors regularly included Walter, Furtwängler, Kleiber, and Klemperer. "It remains a success without precedent in the modern history of opera in Germany."

Similarly, when Toscanini first conducted the Vienna Philharmonic, in works of Mozart,

Beethoven, Wagner, and Brahms, the music historian Ernst Decsey observed in the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*:

It was the great Italian artist who honored our German masters and brought the Philharmonic to a hitherto unachieved triumph. . . . But it will be rather hard for those who follow Toscanini on the Philharmonic podium, since everyone will be measured against his vastness, everyone will be compared to what is incomparable.

European musicians lauded him too. Klemperer dubbed Toscanini "the king of conductors." Monteux called him "the greatest of all." Paderewski de-

scribed him as "a transcendent genius." Hyperbole, perhaps, but certainly not American hyperbole. Comments like these, from the majority of musicians and critics, appeared wherever Toscanini did.

No less grating than even the most uninformed fans' hosannas were the convoluted and dogmatic accusations of Theodor W. Adorno. Horowitz approves of Adorno's strictures, with reservations. Adorno, of course, was an orthodox Schoenbergian and an unorthodox Marxist; therefore Toscanini—who was deaf to the music of the Second Viennese School, and who received astronomical fees from an American corporation (RCA)—represented, in Adorno's estimation, poor musical judgment and crass capitalism at its worst. For a "ruined farmer," Horowitz quotes Adorno, "an order of things that allows him to hear Toscanini compensates for low market prices for farm products; even though he is ploughing cotton under, radio is giving him culture." Adorno presumably had inside information as to how many ruined farmers or otherwise exploited Americans counted themselves among Toscanini's fans and considered his broadcasts adequate consolation for their economic woes. But Horowitz has no quarrel with Adorno's prejudice; for his purposes, it counts as evidence.

Horowitz speculates that Toscanini bears a significant degree of responsibility for the petrification of the standard repertoire, that this congealment was a typically 20th-century American phenomenon. He confutes his own ar-

gument, however, in reporting that as early as 1855, 76 percent of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra's repertoire was by dead composers, and that the programs of Vienna's Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, London's Philharmonic Society, and Paris's Société des Concerts were similarly balanced (or unbalanced) by that time. Today the apparently unbridgeable gap between most contemporary composers and most people who listen to the classics is generally considered the result of highly complicated international social and artistic conditions that have been germinating for well over a century. Toscanini was a manifestation, not a cause, of these developments.

In Toscanini's day, as before and after, there have been performers who have believed themselves duty-bound to play pieces for which they feel no particular sympathy. Toscanini was not one of them. He began his career when Brahms and Verdi were still active; he was comfortably grounded in the music of that period. From what is known of his distaste for post-tonal music, and of his difficulty in conducting complicated rhythms, surely he did well not to touch this century's most adventurous works. It is understandable that some younger composers grumbled when he showed no interest in their music, but nobody suggested that he close up shop merely because his repertoire was not expanding when he was in his 60s, 70s, and 80s. Does Horowitz really believe that Toscanini, had he been willing and able during those years to perform avant-garde works, would have altered the subsequent course of American music?

And if Horowitz thinks musical life was better in the days when concerts did consist largely of contemporary music, he ought to reflect on the contents of typical programs in the Vienna of Beethoven and Schubert: violinists playing virtuoso pieces on one string, 16 pianists banging out Czerny's arrangement of Rossini's *Semiramide* overture, families of eight singing popular arias in several languages, hordes of child prodigies showing off their brilliant techniques. (Alice M. Hanson has recently documented this repertory in *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna*.) Horowitz, with his anti-midcult fixation, would hardly have ap-

proved of these Old World kitsch concerts. But they, not Toscanini's appearances, were the real ancestors of television's music for the eye. Toscanini's absolutely straightforward American symphonic programming, whatever its faults, cannot legitimately be cited in the paternity suit. Making Toscanini responsible for the tinsel of televised music in the United States in the 1980s is like making Kandinsky responsible for Peter Max.

According to Horowitz, Toscanini ought to have conducted contemporary music for which he was not well suited, but ought not to have conducted the Austro-German repertoire for which he was widely appreciated. Horowitz finds Toscanini's approach to that repertoire essentially unidiomatic: "He did not so much discard tradition as disdain ever acquiring it." But Toscanini had heard such Germanic conductors as Richter, Mottl, Muck, Nikisch, Schuch, Steinbach, Mahler, Weingartner, Strauss, and, later, Mengelberg, Walter, Furtwängler, Busch, Klemperer, and Kleiber—each of whom differed nearly as much from the others as Toscanini did from any of them, and most of whom admired him. Recordings demonstrate that as interpreters of German repertoire Furtwängler and Mengelberg had less in common with, for instance, Weingartner, Strauss, Walter, Busch, and Kleiber, than did Toscanini.

LIKE EVERYONE else, Toscanini accepted or rejected elements of others' work in accordance with his artistic metabolism, and his far from negligible critical faculties. He was perfectly aware that his approach often went against mainstream opinion, as is clear from the question he wryly put to the English composer Arthur Bliss: "Tell me, Mr. Bliss—do *you*, as an English musician, think that I, as an Italian, take the slow movements of Beethoven rather fast?" But Horowitz chooses to ignore all such evidence. His approach is that of the Toscanini "cultists" he berates: he wants us to believe that all his own musical preferences are quantitatively, historically, and morally correct. Fact, logic, and the need to appear objective occasionally slow him down in his strangely insistent attack, but they never quite block him.

Horowitz complains, too, that Toscanini "took his tempo from the composer's markings at the head of a movement," whereas Horowitz's hero, Wilhelm Furt-

DREAMS: A DARWINIAN VIEW

Before December had been named,
Or wolves or fire been well tamed,
When Man was but a shivering ape
Caught by the glaciers with no escape,
The snowbound nights, and days, as well,
Were a veritable hell,
And of the trials he had to bear
The worst were time and dread and care.
He could not simply hibernate:
Each dawn he had to wake, and wait
Through all the hours of a day
That wishing could not wish away—
And so he dreamt, and in his dreams
Abolished *is*, invented *seems*.
He passed that time, and time passed by,
And so may you, and so shall I.

TOM DISCH

wängler, said that "the quest of tempo is one which cannot be separated from the interpretation of the piece as a whole, its spiritual image." Horowitz fails to mention, however, that all musicians, including Furtwängler, take a composer's tempo markings as one of the primary indications of a piece's essence, of its "spiritual image." Those indications are sometimes ambiguous. When they are clear (especially when metronome marks are provided) performers who stray far from them, or ignore them altogether, are likely to give a work a different "spiritual image" than that intended by its composer. Is this legitimate? The answer depends not only on aesthetic and historical points of view, which are subject to interesting debate, but also on instinctive, gastro-sexual responses to music, which are not subject to anything of the sort.

Toscanini believed that his task was to "come as close as possible to expressing the composer's ideas." This is a principle far beyond the infantile literalism that Horowitz infers from it when he writes that "the power of Toscanini's textual fidelity creed lay in its innocence, which bypassed moderation and worldly doubt." If that is the case, how is it possible that Toscanini's concept of so many works changed so radically over the years? In the first half of his career, Toscanini usually applied Wagnerian performance practices retroac-

tively to late 18th- and early 19th-century works, as did his contemporaries. Gradually, consciously, he came to consider that approach anti-historical. He spoke often, after about 1920, of "finally" having had the "courage" to make radical choices—to take the first bars of the Beethoven Fifth, for instance, in the same tempo as the body of the movement; to eliminate big, flexed rubatos from pre-Wagnerian works; to opt for unorthodox tempi when he believed they worked best. Horowitz has every right to disagree with these and any other decisions made by Toscanini. He has no right, however, to impute ignorance to the man with whom he disagrees. It is Horowitz who has bypassed moderation and worldly doubt.

A less arrogant critic could write a useful dissenting study of the Toscanini recordings. A social historian could produce a book about the impact of the public relations industry on American musical life, a book in which Toscanini might appear for a page or two. But the attempt to shoe-horn the two subjects into a single volume was ill-judged; Joseph Horowitz has helped to obscure them both.

HARVEY SACHS

Harvey Sachs is the author of *Toscanini* (Da Capo Press), *Virtuoso* (Thames and Hudson), and the forthcoming *Music in Fascist Italy*.

vre that would make J.D. Salinger's publishing career seem promiscuous, is musty. The technically adept verses consciously emulate Edna St. Vincent Millay, yet they rarely match the hard-boiled romanticism of the similarly piquant Lorenz Hart song lyrics of Parker's era. The stories, however much they may attempt to bring off Ring Lardner's disturbing deadpan, too often defeat themselves by hammering in their ironies, or by sentimentalizing the suicidal despair of women who are treated like doormats by men. (To see how Lardner effortlessly achieves what Parker pants after, one need only compare his story of an elderly couple's marriage, "The Golden Honeymoon," with hers of young honeymooners, "Here We Are.")

Although an exercise in liberal consciousness-raising such as "Arrangement in Black and White" was daring for its time, it is no more rewarding to read now than Laura Z. Hobson's *Gentleman's Agreement*. Parker's book reviews offer slight insight into the few worthy authors (from Hemingway to Updike) whom she elected to discuss as the "Constant Reader" of the *New Yorker* and, toward the end of her life, as an irregular *Esquire* columnist. Marred by vigorous logrolling on behalf of friends, and by easy hits at large targets (Fannie Hurst, Aimee Semple McPherson), her criticism must now be sifted mainly for its one-liners at the expense of the forgotten. Though many recall the zinger "The House Beautiful is the play lousy," the line has long since outlived any memory of the work (by Channing Pollock) that stimulated its creation. That the joke gets a laugh anyway speaks well of Parker's verbal facility and timing. But doesn't it also reveal how empty this sort of cleverness is?

Yet Leslie Frewin's new Parker biography believes in its subject's importance, even if it has trouble articulating why. In his conclusion Frewin tries at first to strike a feminist note: "She had spelled it out to American women that it really was all right to be audacious, self-assured, bright and witty; she had given them the right to use the wisecracks, ripostes, and caustic quip." In an epilogue he adds that Parker "was more than just a wit. She was a walking enigma . . ." But Frewin clearly isn't satisfied with his own vague judgments, and so he mixes them up with a frantic litany of opinions from an incongruous pantheon that encompasses Conor Cruise O'Brien, Oscar

PAIN IN THE SASS

The Late Mrs. Dorothy Parker by Leslie Frewin

(Macmillan, 345 pp., \$22.95)

No list of native American wits is ever likely to exclude Dorothy Parker. But does anyone remember exactly what she wrote? There were seven slender books of stories and light verse—for that matter, does anyone remember light verse?—and there were plays and screenplays. But aside from her most sustained story, "Big Blonde," and her only enduring Hollywood and Broadway collaborations (as a co-scenarist of the first *A Star Is Born* and an additional lyricist of the 1956 Leonard Bernstein *Candide*), the Parker legend rests on epigrams and punch lines. A one-couplet poem titled "News

Item"—"Men seldom make passes/At girls who wear glasses"—remains the No. 1 work in the canon. It is followed by the still-funny wisecracks that have been regurgitated for much of the century by the chroniclers of the Algonquin's Round Table: "One more drink and I'd have been under the host," and "I'll say of Verlaine, too, he was always chasing Rimbauds," and "That woman is so highly educated that she speaks 18 different languages. And she can't say no in any of them."

The rest of the Parker output, if "out-put" can accurately characterize an oeu-

Hammerstein, Arnold Gingrich, and Ruth Gordon. The most sympathetic comments come from Edmund Wilson, who said of Parker that she was “not Emily Brontë, or Jane Austen, but she has been at some pains to write well, and she has put into what she has written a voice, a state of mind, an era, a few moments of human experience that nobody else has conveyed.” Wilson’s carefully formulated consideration of his friend is more or less seconded by Lillian Hellman, Parker’s literary executor (and the guardian of her secrets from all biographers, Frewin included): “She was part of nothing and nobody except herself: it was this independence of mind and spirit that was her true distinction.”

Some of this is true. Parker, the only woman of the original Round Table, paved a way for other women writers, if not for all American women: perhaps such present-day cultural commentators as Fran Lebowitz, Nora Ephron, and Pauline Kael, among many others, are second- or third-generation beneficiaries of Parker’s insistence on her right to be a vinegary literary wise guy. (What she didn’t want to be was a “woman writer.” “It’s a terrible thing to say,” Parker once remarked, “but I can’t think of any good women writers. Of course, calling them women writers is their ruin: they begin to think of themselves that way.”) Nor can it be doubted that Parker’s fiction, as Wilson and Hellman suggest, provides wry, independent-minded documentation of an era.

IT’S THE era in question, however, that tells the tale—both of the real meaning of Parker’s career and of its failure to sustain itself. Coming of creative age during the boom after the First World War, she was among the earliest American writers to profit from the explosion in slick magazines and the burgeoning new mass-publicity apparatus that helped fuel them. Parker found her voice in the pages of such then-novel publications as *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, and the *New Yorker*. She was transformed into a celebrity not so much by her early writing as by press agents and a newspaper columnist (Franklin Pierce Adams, who reprinted her most marketable sallies in his “Conning Tower” in the *New York Tribune*).

In her frivolity and her confused aspirations, Parker could hold her own with the men of the Round Table, all right. But her equality proved an empty victory. She eventually discovered just how lowly

that status was in the true scheme of literary history. Let Frewin think, as he writes, that the Algonquin crowd constitutes “a *Who’s Who* of past American writers and entertainers, with outstanding exclusions like Faulkner, Dreiser, Hemingway and others.” Parker understood that those exclusions counted more than the inclusions. “People romanticize [the Round Table],” she said in an interview in her final years. “This was no Mermaid Tavern. These were no giants. Think of who was writing in those days—Lardner, Fitzgerald, Faulkner and Hemingway. Those were the real giants. The Round Table was just a lot of people telling jokes and telling each other how good they were.”

And, indeed, like Parker, other pioneer Round Table wits—notably Alexander Woolcott and Robert Benchley—preferred to remain miniaturists or archetypal multimedia celebrities, whether in New York or in Hollywood, in print or on stage or on screen. Their contribution to literature is even less than Parker’s; like her, they were much too busy landing in the columns or attending opening-night parties or writing public jests or screenplays to turn their attention to real work. Being famous is a full-time job.

Frewin briefly touches on the conflict between literary ambition and instant gratification in Parker, even if he can’t resolve it:

Many of her writings display a dismissive loathing of show business with all its traditional razzmatazz. But throughout her life she was ambivalently drawn to the glitter of the footlights of the theater and the klieg lights of the movies, the stars and the hangers-on. . . . Most people who knew her believed that her attempts to impress through her work were directed unfalteringly toward a shrewdly calculated ambition to become a celebrity.

If the Round Table had only persisted, its members would doubtless have become panelists on *What’s My Line?*—and perennial talk-show guests. (It isn’t hard to imagine them being “brilliant” with show business’s current *reductio ad absurdum* of Parker, Joan Rivers.) The literary heirs of Parker, Benchley, and Company—talented writers who now appear in party columns and film credits but rarely between book covers—are legion today.

What Frewin calls Parker’s “enigmatic” aspects don’t end with her divided loyalties to art and commerce. A liberal who was hounded by HUAC and who left her

estate to Martin Luther King and the NAACP, she hung out with moneyed snobs, favored the most Aryan-appearing (and pedigreed) men, and sometimes was condescending toward Jews (including her despised father, a prosperous cloak-and-suit manufacturer named J. Henry Rothschild). Although constantly on the search for avid bedroom partners, she twice married the bisexual actor and writer Alan Campbell.

BUT THESE matters—like Parker’s unhappy childhood, her suicide attempts, and the two decades of alcoholic oblivion preceding her death, at age 73, in 1967—are only perfunctorily examined in Frewin’s biography. This is a hack cut-and-paste job that often either recapitulates or quotes profusely from secondary sources, including the previous journalistic biography of Parker (*You Might As Well Live: The Life and Times of Dorothy Parker* by John Keats, which appeared in 1970), the relevant Hellman memoirs, and the various Round Table round-ups (by James R. Gaines, Scott Meredith, and others). Frewin’s idea of journalistic enterprise includes having “dined à deux on numerous occasions with Merle Oberon on the balcony of her suite at Monte Carlo’s Hotel de Paris.” He uses the words “mordant” and “acerbic” at every opportunity, never resists a cliché or an alliterative phrase (“living legend,” “epicene epigrams,” “rapier ripostes”), and among other psychological banalities speculates that “happiness is rarely the lot of the searching, contemplative mind.”

Frewin’s mind is something else. His non sequiturs are a hoot: “But if her self-deprecation was limitless, her concern for the peasants of Spain seemed genuine.” His Frederick Lewis Allen-esque attempt to encapsulate the cultural march of time sounds like a Woody Allen, if not a Parker, parody: “And there was Faulkner making literary history with his sometimes overlong books, and the ‘fearsome talent’ of Don Marquis with his enchanting *archy and mehitabel* books, and a man named John Steinbeck of whom approving noises were beginning to be heard . . .” The book is further padded with irrelevant lists (of the à la carte dishes the Round Tablers spurned on the Algonquin’s menu, of closing stock prices after the 1929 crash), gratuitous news bulletins (“The Côte d’Azur hardly reacted to the news that Valentino had died in the Polyclinic Hospital back in Manhattan . . .”), and

bizarrely interpolated historical texts (FDR's declaration of war, the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution).

Frewin is best off when he lets "the lady," as he's inclined to call her, speak for herself, since Parker was her own shrewdest critic. Refusing to accept the label "humorist," she said, "There's a helluva distance between wisecracking and wit," and on one occasion she explained the difference: "Wit has truth in it. Wisecracking is simply calisthenics . . . with words." But while Dorothy Parker was more wisecracker than wit, wisecracking is not without its own eternal, if small, uses. One can hardly discuss this biography, after all, without recycling its subject's memorable verdict on another new book of long ago: "It was written

without fear and without research."

Such jests are hard to find in the genteel pages of the latter-day *New Yorker*, where Harvard *Lampoon* whimsy has long since won out over Parker urbanity. The *Algonquin* itself survives, of course—fittingly, as a place for self-display rather than a bastion of wit. It was there that William Shawn and Robert Gottlieb inevitably held the summit that marked the changing of the *New Yorker* guard. Were there any quotable epigrams exchanged over their "Round Table"? What does it matter, as long as the paparazzi were there?

FRANK RICH

Frank Rich is the drama critic for the *New York Times*.

RAISING OUR DEVILS

Ronald Reagan, The Movie And Other Episodes in Political Demonology by Michael Paul Rogin

(University of California Press, 366 pp., \$25)

"My turn to movies," says Michael Paul Rogin, "responds to a shift in American politics from appeals to history (however mythicized) to the more immediate power of the screen." Only three of the nine essays in this collection are on film subjects, but they are the most pungent in this frequently provocative book. The three film subjects exemplify, in varying measure, the book's theme: the use of political demonology by American countersubversives. Rogin, a teacher of political science at Berkeley, defines demonology right at the start: "The creation of monsters as a continuing feature of American politics by the inflation, stigmatization, and dehumanization of political foes." The "creation of monsters" is of course not the monopoly of countersubversives, but this is the most powerful species of monster in American history; and, with the aid of Marx and Freud, Rogin examines it.

In the title essay, which begins the book, Rogin proposes that President Reagan's mind is populated with demons—of Reds or any questioners of rugged individualism—and that those demons derive from his Hollywood ex-

perience. "Reagan . . . found out who he was through the roles he played on film." He did this "by responding to typecasting that either attracted or repelled him." This is a troubled thesis. First, it's far from clear that Reagan always had the control over his film career that Rogin implies. Second, after he had control, he didn't always exercise it. Recently, for a Hollywood tribute to the producer Hal Wallis, Reagan sent a filmed message admitting that he sometimes left the decision up to Wallis and others, saying, "You fellas have done all right by me so far, so I'll do whichever one you think is best for me." Third, even if he chose all the scripts himself, it's extraordinary that he found so many roles that, consciously or not, mated molecularly with him.

Rogin scores points with such films as *Murder in the Air* and *Desperate Journey*, underlining how the attitudes of the Reagan characters in those scripts link up with his later mentality; still such linkages ignore two factors. Those ideas were what many in this country believed. (That's why they were in the scripts.) Reagan wasn't especially privy

to them, or to their demonological representation, just by acting in films employing them. Moreover, there are Reagan film roles that don't fit Rogin's thesis no matter how he juggles them, like the drunk in *Dark Victory* and the criminal in *The Killers*.

Past the matter of conservative ideology, Rogin takes even braver leaps into Freudian areas, broaching the relation of Reagan's film roles to psychological-familial elements in him. Here Rogin emphasizes *Knute Rockne—All American* and *King's Row*. Both these films are still close to Reagan; the president's references to the Gipper are all too well known. But it is some distance from that fact to Rogin's inference that *Knute Rockne* replaced "an unreliable, dependent father [Reagan père was a hard-drinking drifter] with an idealized strong one" and transformed "forbidden anger at the historical father into the filmed son's sacrifice." This is to contend that a role played for a few weeks effected a huge, permanent mental transformation in its actor. Such effects supposedly occur in the history of acting. (Of one veteran Lincoln impersonator it used to be said that "he won't be happy until somebody shoots him.") But this is to argue a weakness in Reagan that even his stiffest critics might demur at. Are we to believe that the present-day Reagan carries Rockne around in his head as a replacement for his father?

King's Row is a fabled Reagan household rerun. The title of his autobiography, *Where's the Rest of Me?*, is a line from his part in the film, when the character discovers that his legs have been amputated. But does this fact authorize such flat pronouncements as "The movie reunited him to his problematic [family] history, in order, by amputation, to free him"? Rogin makes it sound as if that was why Warner Brothers decided to make the film, and why the actor wanted the role.

Rogin continues his absolute analogizing. Reagan won a lot of the girls in his films by suffering illnesses and "other forms of humiliation. He got the girl, like his father, by being dependent." The thought is again inescapable that the studio had very obliging screenwriters, willing to probe Reagan's family history and provide him with therapy-by-casting. Reagan played some characters who posed as criminals or subversives in order to expose evildoers; Rogin says that "the process threatened to raise doubts about who Reagan actually was." This

suggests that voters in Reagan elections, especially the earlier ones, were worried by his role in *Cattle Queen of Montana*. Rogin is on more solid ground when he deals with Reagan's union activities during the immediate postwar years. In those early years of the cold war, says Rogin, Reagan formed his political consciousness while doing his union work. "Reagan's enlightenment about communism in postwar Hollywood defines the founding moment of the politics in which we now all live."

In the end, one long episode in Reagan's pre-Hollywood life, cited by Garry Wills in *Reagan's America*, seems to me to have been more seminal for his personal code and public image than his film roles. In the six summers of 1927-32, when Reagan was 16 to 21, he worked as a lifeguard in Illinois and was credited with 71 rescues. The straightforward heroism of the lifeguard, free of complexity or ambiguity, might well have affected Reagan's vision of life more than any of the parts he played for a few weeks each.

ROGIN'S second film essay is on *The Birth of a Nation*, and centers on the demonological view of blacks. Particularly harsh in the context of this book, much of which deals with racism, is the concussive truth about this film: it was made by our first great film artist, it was the longest American film to date, and it was racist. Rogin notes that *Birth* brought together three Southerners who had moved north: D. W. Griffith, the son of a Confederate colonel; Thomas Dixon Jr., author of *The Clansman*, the novel on which the film was based; and Woodrow Wilson, who saw an advance screening in the White House. Wilson said of the film, though it was later disavowed, "It is like writing history with Lightning. And my only regret is that it is all so terribly true." The *Moving Picture World* of March 13, 1915, reported a curtain speech at the New York premiere in which Dixon said that "no one save the son of a soldier and a Southerner could have made such a picture."

Birth became one of the most successful films in world history, but it had mixed reactions from the start. The NAACP started a campaign against it before it opened. Francis Hackett attacked it angrily in THE NEW REPUBLIC (March 20, 1915), although he concentrated on Dixon and did not mention Griffith or any actor. Latter-day critics tend to view *Birth* as two films: Part One (the Civil

War), in which—Jay Leyda's words—"the genius and inventive passion of Griffith were at their peak"; Part Two (the aftermath), "racist melodrama and raw historical distortion . . ." Part Two was later censored somewhat, but *Birth* represented, in some measure still represents, American filmmaking to the world.

Rogin says discerningly that "Klansmen [in Part Two] ride with or into the camera; their power contrasts to the futility of Civil War charges [in Part One]." He reminds us that for the principal black characters Griffith used white actors in blackface. (This, despite the fact that, as other sources tell us, many black actors were on hand, living in segregated barracks.) One reason for Griffith's choice might have been that audiences of the time needed the reassurance that it wasn't a real black man grappling with Lillian Gish.

But Rogin pushes the matter further: "Whites in blackface allowed Griffith to inhabit the fantasies he imposed on blacks, to keep those fantasies his own." This speculation (what else can it be called?) leads to more heavy psychologizing. For instance, Rogin devotes a long passage to the sequence in which Gus, a (blackface) black, is castrated after an attack on a white woman, a sequence that, though now omitted, was seen in Los Angeles for weeks after the premiere and in the South for five years more. Griffith had vivid memories of his father's Confederate sword; therefore, for Rogin, "the sword that castrates Gus has also been severed from the father's body. . . . Griffith rescued the paternal sword by detaching it from the father's body and put it into the hands of the father's specter," who did the castrating. Some may think that Griffith had other reasons for choosing the film's title, but for Rogin, "The nation was born in Gus's castration, from the wound that signified the white man's power to stop the black seed." Repeatedly, in this manner, just when we may think that Rogin has opened up an insight, his intoxication with his "discovery" takes him so far that we find ourselves judging the critic rather than being enlightened about the work.

ROGIN'S third film piece is a study of the anti-communist pictures made in Hollywood between 1943 and 1964. As he knows, those films have been well studied. His chief contributions are not ideological or cinematic, but psychoanalytic. He advances the

theory that, in those films, communist activity is connected to Oedipal feelings. In our demonology, he says, "the subversive has always made the American home into his or her chief target: Indians kidnapped and massacred women and children; blacks raped women; revolutionaries promoted free love; and the Communist state invaded the family sanctity." Thus woman was zealously guarded in the home, and in recompense she ruled the family. Rogin then attempts to prove that, out of the very attempt to safeguard the female, the male in cold war films becomes communist.

A main item in this convoluted charge is *My Son John* (1952). John's father warns him that Communists are no longer only foreigners; they are now also Americans. But John's mother coddles him instead of threatening him:

The newer maternal methods of loving influence only make matters worse. John has become a Communist, the film implies, because of the liberal ideas and sexual availability of his mother. . . . John has imbibed his mother's naive humanitarianism and, to distance himself from her, taken it in a sinister direction.

Consciously resisting unconscious attraction, John becomes a Communist so that he won't violate his mother.

The flight-from-incest theory cannot be labeled "wrong"; but one test of it is to look at other works by the same filmmakers. Leo McCarey, the director, is probably best known for light comedies and a religious bonbon, *Going My Way*. Myles Connolly, co-author with McCarey of the screenplay, has to his credit, among other achievements, two Tarzan pictures. We can't argue that McCarey and Connolly were incapable of psychological subtlety; but we might have to assume that, in *My Son John*, the unconscious in both men took over while remaining desperately unconscious.

OF THE OTHER six essays in the book, not all of which connect directly with Rogin's theme, the strongest is "Liberal Society and the Indian Question," a study that he wrote five years before his book *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (1975). More on "liberal society" later; here I note that from the appalling history of white treatment of Indians, Rogin recounts some elements scathingly. But he overlooks an aspect of this terrible chronicle that is a demonological parallel to his pairings of politics and films: the creation of

Indian images in American plays.

Of the nearly 300 plays with Indian characters written in this country between 1766 and 1916 (the compass of present scholarship in the field), those with noble Indian protagonists and white villains predominated until the middle of the 19th century. Then, as white settlers poured westward, came the era of melodramas in which the only good Indian was a dead Indian because then his land was available. After the turn of the century, when white America had all the territory and could afford to be tristful, the theater's view of Indians changed to one of rue and admiration. Thus, through a century and a half of these plays, hagiography became demonology, which reverted to hagiography when white interests altered.

The overall difficulty with facing the facts of white treatment of Indians is in imagining rational alternatives. History is composed of "if onlys" to make the heart break. But what is the "if only" in this bloody story? Some contemporary voices of whites (Emerson's among them) were raised against the brutalities and the so-called removals. Certainly the treaties could have been honored; and nothing can begin to excuse the butcheries (which of course provoked counter-butcheries). But is it conceivable that, after Europe had set foot on the eastern shore and began to send millions more, whites could have co-existed forever with Indians who lived mainly as nomad hunters? Rogin's essay, harrowingly truthful though it is, pays scant attention to the difficulties of a credible alternative, to any believable *modus vivendi* with the Native Americans.

AT THE LAST, however, despite flawed arguments and overheated psychologizings, the book has an effect. Like a lab technician, Rogin stains viruses in the areas discussed above and in an essay on political repression. At the very least he reminds us that formulations in politics—and in films as vessels of politics—are always, to some degree, consciously or unconsciously coded systems. There is always more to demons, to the desire for demons, than the constructs that are presented.

Who, in Rogin's asserted Marxian view, is chiefly responsible, either by commission or connivance, for the creation of political demons? He leaves no doubt about his answer: the liberal. His definition: "In calling America a liberal society, I mean to evoke the unchallenged

primacy of propertied individualism across the political spectrum." It has an echo of Tocqueville's warnings against individualism; still, Rogin's definition is so broad, equating all propertied individualists with liberalism no matter what the person's political views (this, of course, would make Reagan a liberal), that it weakens his definition. His meaning is much clearer through his frequent citations of the liberal in action or inaction: a liberal is one who thinks of himself/herself as humane, unbigoted, progressive, yet who is also quite able to pursue life as it is, even if the pursuit means accepting or ignoring grave social and political ills.

His indictment sticks—partially. The condition of Indians and the treatment of blacks, to name only two of Rogin's subjects, were quite tolerable for many liberals, until activists (some of them liberals) made them less tolerable. Admittedly, not all liberals stood immediately and firmly against McCarthyism. Some liberals took a painfully long time to stand against the Vietnam War. But a great deal of the effective opposition to McCarthyism and Vietnam of which I am aware was carried on by liberals.

Look beneath specific issues, which can be scored for one side or another indefinitely, to basic defects. If the liberal's besetting sin is coziness, a belief or cultivated delusion that all the world is like a New England town meeting in which opinions are freely expressed, after which everyone goes back to a comfy home, what is the Marxist's cognate sin? Surely for the American Marxist it is a different sort of coziness, the safety of a position that allows one to feel superior in daring, from which one can criticize the less radical in theory without having to put one's ideas to the test. American liberals, shortcomings and all, make American Marxists possible.

Rogin does much to shake the liberal, but he proposes no unmistakably Marxist solutions to any of the issues he raises—to the issues that evoked the demons. (He makes sure to include anti-Stalinist and anti-Soviet comments to dissociate himself from some Marxist praxis that has actually been attempted in the world.) Principally he recounts what, in his view, liberal laxness has permitted. Yet in proof, his book's best use may turn out to be for the liberal, who, remaining liberal, digests (Rogin would probably say co-opts) whatever of value that it offers.

STANLEY KAUFFMANN

CORRESPONDENCE, from page 6

Plague," April 27). Some physicians may, as he states, suggest to their patients "with condescension, that they visit a psychiatrist." As a psychiatrist, I have treated patients with depression associated with the presence of Epstein-Barr virus antibodies. Emotional complaints associated with a physical illness may be the result of organic changes related to the illness and psychological reactions to being physically ill. I hope no one suffering from depression or mood swings associated with EBV chose not to seek psychiatric help because they inferred from the use of the word "condescension" that such help was not clinically indicated.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Pundit's Migraine

IN OUR HOUR of need, let's remember Charles Sandman, the New Jersey congressman who defended Richard Nixon to the last, or Earl ("Don't confuse me with facts") Landgrebe, the Indiana statesman who said he'd rather be shot than vote for Nixon's impeachment. Or the late lamented Roman Hruska, who said that if Nixon resigned the United States would be a banana republic. These men were anachronisms ahead of their time. After all, Nixon did resign and—son of a gun—the U.S. government does bear a certain resemblance to a banana republic. "Reagan's Junta" (to use Theodore Draper's apt phrase), composed of several right-wing colonels, wielded power while an ineffectual legislature did nothing. As evidence implicating President Reagan in various illegal activities gathers, the sandmen are coming back, with generosity in their hearts and sleep in their eyes. R. W. Apple of the *New York Times*, for example, wrote a dispatch finding little potential drama in the Iran-*contra* hearings. Among his social class this is true. Elite Washington journalists aren't eager to hype a story that sat unnoticed underneath their noses from August 1985 to November 1986.

RICHARD SECORD, Oliver North's right-hand man, cheered me up by discussing his good friend Rafael Quintero on the first day of the Iran-*contra* hearings. Apple probably doesn't know it but Rafael Quintero is a former CIA agent specializing in sabotage and assassination. By talking at length about him, Secord confirms that the White House was employing a crew of international sleazeballs to run its clandestine foreign policy. (If you want to understand just how sleazy this crowd is, read Peter Maas's book *Manhunt*, about CIA agent Edwin Wilson.) In April the CBS magazine show "West 57th Street" reported that Quintero was in charge of a drug smuggling operation that brought 25,000 pounds of marijuana into the country. Pilots interviewed on camera said that they flew guns to *contras* in Central America and returned, per Quintero's orders, with marijuana and cocaine. That evening, I went to a noisy wine and cheese party for rejuvenated left-liberal scandal aficionados. A woman sold me a button that reads, "Just say No(rth)." This, I like to think, was Rafael Quintero's motto.

I KEEP A FILE of possible story ideas labeled "Too Good To Check." It is bulging after two days of Gary Hart frenzy. A woman from a network news organization tells me her colleagues have been checking out a rumor that the original tip on the Hart story was, in fact, leaked by Donna Rice's roommate. They couldn't find anything. Here's my scenario. These two aspiring women figured out the perfect scam for making the prettier one famous. They understood that the presidential selection process is really a difficult and expensive course in becoming a celebrity. And these two women (I imagine) got in on the action without ever forming a PAC or making a ridiculous TV commercial or entering a primary. Here's how they might have proceeded. The girlfriend knows the two of them are going to Washington to see Hart and a buddy of his. She calls the *Miami Herald*. (The *Herald* says the tip that led to the story was unusually detailed.) Five reporters stake out Hart and Rice. Hart is cross-examined and looks like a fool. Donna Rice displays the aplomb that is no doubt her calling card. Donna's girlfriend, meanwhile, has vanished with remarkable efficiency and has still not been questioned. Hart's career is destroyed, an unexpected and perhaps lamentable side effect. The main goal of this ingenious operation has been achieved: Donna's career is launched. She didn't even have to go to Iowa.

SEVERAL COLLEAGUES liked my "Just Say No(rth)" button, but they just laugh when I say it came from the Impeach Meese, Bush, Reagan Committee. Meese, Bush, and Reagan can't be impeached, it is said, because . . . because . . . because . . . they won't be. This nervous denial is the first symptom of a painful disease known as Pundit's Migraine that is now spreading in Washington. This malady originates in the brain cells of thoughtful observers. As the pressure from the countless lies of Reagan, Bush, Meese, McFarlane, Poin-dexter, Casey, Abrams, et al. add up, the brain cells begin to rearrange. Depleted conventional wisdom enzymes mutate into strange new forms. The resulting thought patterns—"Ronald Reagan might have to resign"—cause hot

flashes, shortness of breath, and strange gurgling noises. The patient may say odd things such as "national tragedy," "time for bipartisanship," and "let's not over-react." These symptoms are a sign that the patient is already brain dead.

A FRIEND FROM CALIFORNIA called with a brilliant new Donna Rice theory. He reminds me that the 1972 Watergate break-in was only a watered-down version of Gordon Liddy's original plan to disrupt the Democratic presidential race. Liddy originally proposed that Democratic presidential candidates be lured onto a boat loaded with high-priced call girls and hidden cameras. Liddy's love boat was supposed to sail to Bimini.

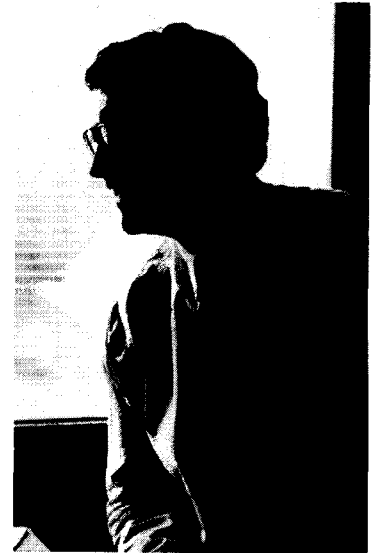
THE GARMENT FAMILY of Washington, D.C., has taken up the job of leading Reagan's bedraggled intellectual defenders. Leonard Garment, formerly of the Nixon White House, is Bud McFarlane's lawyer; wife Suzanne was a columnist for the *Wall Street Journal*. Her column on Oliver North last May was a comic masterpiece of Reagan-era disinformation designed to protect North and the White House from damage. Leonard followed up with a weepy piece in the April issue of *Commentary* that was recently excerpted in the *Washington Post* under the poignant title "Does America Really Need this Orgy of Investigation?" Garment gives plenty of reason to think so. He offers the daring thought that "it is not anti-democratic, of course, to require that public officials obey the law." But he questioned whether crimes "committed in a climate of authorization by the highest officials of the executive branch" should be prosecuted at all. Garment's eagerness to suggest that Reagan condoned breaking the law is refreshing. His legal theorizing is dubious, though. I propose that all Reagan administration officials convicted of Iran-*contra* scandal crimes be sent to Lorton Reformatory. This is Washington's overwhelmingly black, horribly overcrowded prison for common street criminals. The poor bastards stuck there and various administration officials might enjoy a fruitful exchange on what constitutes a "climate of authorization" for criminal activity.

J. M.

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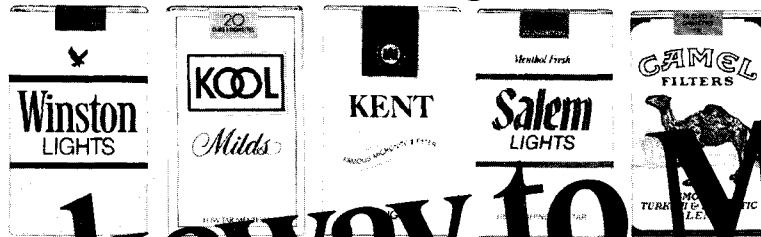
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